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Individual and Collective Memory in Dialogue

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UNIVERSITY OF COPENHAGEN
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Autobiography After Empire

Individual and Collective Memory in Dialogue

PhD Thesis

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Abstract

Decolonisation was a major event of the twentieth century, redrawing maps and impacting on identity narratives around the globe. As new nations defined their place in the world, the national and imperial past was retold in new cultural memories. These developments have been studied at the level of the collective, but insufficient attention has been paid to how individuals respond to such narrative changes. This dissertation examines the relationship between individual and collective memory at the end of empire through analysis of 13 end of empire autobiographies by public intellectuals from Australia, the Anglophone Caribbean and Zimbabwe. I conceive of memory as reconstructive and social, with individual memory striving to make sense of the past in the present in dialogue with surrounding narratives. By examining recurring tropes in the autobiographies, like colonial education, journeys to the imperial metropole, political legitimacy at the end of empire and settler family innocence, I argue that the writers engage with collective memories about empire in their personal recollections. Such collective narratives pattern autobiographies so that the same concerns and rhetoric recur in widely different contexts, and they provide a narrative framework within which authors try to fit their own stories by corroborating or countering dominant accounts. The collective context affects what is remembered and how it is articulated, and at the same time individuals seek to affect how the collective past and their own role in it are remembered. As such, end of empire autobiographies offer a window onto the narrative present in which they are written and reveal how the authors want to position themselves. I argue that this dialogue between individual and collective narratives is crucial to understanding memory after empire.

Resumé

Afkoloniseringen af det britiske imperium var en af det tyvende århundredes store omvæltninger, som ændrede det globale landkort og påvirkede fortællinger om identitet verden over. Idet nye nationer skulle definere deres plads i verden, blev den nationale og imperiale fortid genfortalt i nye kulturelle erindringer. Disse bevægelser er blevet studeret på kollektivt plan, men der har ikke været tilstrækkelig opmærksomhed på, hvordan individer responderer på sådanne narrative forandringer. Denne afhandling undersøger forholdet mellem individuel og kollektiv erindring ved det britiske imperiums ophør gennem en analyse af 13 'end of empire' selvbiografier forfattet af offentlige personligheder fra Australien, det engelsktalende Caribien og Zimbabwe. Jeg betragter erindring som en rekonstruerende og social størrelse, hvor individuel erindring søger at skabe mening ud af fortiden i nutiden i dialog med omgivende fortællinger. Ved at undersøge troper i selvbiografierne – såsom kolonial uddannelse, rejser til den imperiale metropol, politisk legitimitet ved imperiets afslutning og bosætter-familiers uskyld – argumenterer jeg for, at forfatterne beskæftiger sig med kollektive erindringer om imperiet i deres personlige erindringer. Sådanne kollektive fortællinger giver form til selvbiografier, således at de samme overvejelser og retoriske greb dukker op i vidt forskellige kontekster, og de skaber den fortællemæssige ramme, indenfor hvilken forfatterne forsøger at få deres egen historie til at passe ved at bidrage til eller modvirke dominerende historier. Den kollektive kontekst påvirker, hvad der erindres, og hvordan det artikuleres, og samtidig søger folk at påvirke, hvordan den kollektive fortid og deres egen rolle i den skal erindres. Således giver 'end of empire' selvbiografier et vindue til den fortællemæssige samtid, i hvilken de er skrevet, og afslører, hvordan forfatterne ønsker at positionere sig selv. Jeg argumenterer for, at denne dialog mellem individuelle og kollektive narrativer er uundværlig, hvis vi skal forstå erindring efter imperiet.

Contents

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If one were to write a study of memory called 'Nostalgia in Academic Life Stories', the PhD years would surely feature prominently. Reminiscing fondly about their own time as PhD students, many a colleague have reminded me to make the most of the halcyon days of full time research. They need not have worried, however, that I would forget to enjoy it. Being a PhD student has been the most stimulating, challenging and just plain fun experience of my still young life. For this I must thank the authors of the piles of autobiographies in my office and the generous PhD grant that has supported me for three years. But my task would not have been nearly as enjoyable had it not been for the people with whom I have shared this experience and who have great shares in the result.

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1
Introduction

In his classic cricket memoir from 1963, the Trinidadian author C. L. R. James reminisces with fondness about the English principal of his childhood school:

> How not to look up to the England of Shakespeare and Milton, of Thackeray and Dickens, of Hobbs and Rhodes, in the daily presence of such an Englishman and in the absence of any nationalist agitation outside? In the nationalist temper of today Mr. Burslem would be an anachronism, his bristling Britishness a perpetual reminder not of what he was doing but of what he represented. I write of him as he was, and today, forty years after, despite all that I have learnt between, what I think of him now is not very different from what I thought then.[1]

Coming from a professed anti-colonialist, the nostalgic tone may be surprising. Yet situating James' remarks within their historical context and in relation to his personal attitude to Britishness will help unpack them. In 1963, Trinidad had just achieved independence from Britain; a process James' anti-colonial work had been instrumental in furthering. But brought up, as he was, in a middle-class British respectability, James also harboured positive feelings about England, where he lived for many years, and about the cultural heritage with which he associated Mr Burslem.[2] His narrative navigates within these conflicting emotions and within the broader field of historical change.

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[1] James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 29.
[2] Gikandi, 'The Embarrassment of Victorianism', 157–59; Howe, 'C. L. R. James', 160–61; Schwarz, 'Crossing the Seas', 5.

Despite James' assertion that he is writing about this principal 'as he was', clearly, his memory is affected by his having to take into account the changing national temper of Trinidad at the time of writing, which makes his former principal 'an anachronism'. Even while he is trying to protect this fond memory from the intrusion of politics, this salvage mission is futile – James may continue to hold Mr Burslem in high regard, but he cannot keep his memories hermetically sealed from the changing world. This demonstrates the dialogical relationship between individual and collective memory; as the narrative context changes, personal recollections have to adapt.

This thesis sets out to investigate the relationship between individual and collective memory at the end of empire as voiced through the practice of autobiographical writing. Through close readings of more than a dozen autobiographies and memoirs from Australia, the Anglophone Caribbean and Zimbabwe, I examine how changes to collective narratives about the imperial past manifest themselves in personal life stories. I argue that individuals attempt to navigate the changing narrative landscape of decolonisation in ways which are reflected in how they make sense of personal and national memories and how they position themselves in relation to a contemporary audience. I focus my analysis on some of the recurrent tropes which people use to structure their recollections: colonial education; journeys to the imperial metropole; political legitimacy at the end of empire; and finally settler family innocence. To study these tropes, I combine tools and insights from memory studies and autobiography studies. I consider collective and individual narratives alike as attempts at creating meaning from a present point of view and therefore wholly caught up in the interests of the moment of narration.

As an examination of a historical question (how do individuals respond to collective narrative changes after empire) while employing a literary source base (the autobiography), my thesis places itself within several scholarly traditions. Memory studies has experienced a boom which has now lasted several decades in which culture and narrative are increasingly

coming to the fore as objects of analysis. There is a growing recognition in the field of memory as social and constructed in the present and an emphasis on dialogical processes of remembrance reverberating between the individual rememberer and the social and cultural framework. [3] In autobiography studies, too, scholars are increasingly turning to the 'relationality' between author and surroundings and to the cultural and historical context of a text.[4] In both fields, empire and decolonisation have offered fascinating case studies which place the individual in its historical context.[5] From historical studies, researchers have started to look for the '"inner life" of decolonization, the traces of which have been so difficult to locate', and in their search turn increasingly to cultural products to understand the intimate afterlife of empire.[6] Yet despite the overlap in interests, historians of decolonisation, students of memory and literary critics of autobiography have rarely brought together their insights to examine how decolonisation influences the way in which individual memories are narrated in autobiographies. It is at this intersection that this thesis makes its intervention.

A term which reappears in memory, autobiography and decolonisation studies is 'identity', whether used to describe the individual or collective. Indeed, in what he says is the first semantic history of 'identity', Philip Gleason argues that the reason for the popular success of the term in the 1950s was that

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[3] Berntsen and Bohn, 'Cultural Life Scripts and Individual Life Stories'; Brockmeier, *Beyond the Archive*; Erll and Nünning, *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies*; Hammack, 'Narrative and the Cultural Psychology of Identity'; Olick, 'Collective Memory'; Ross, 'Relation of Implicit Theories to the Construction of Personal Histories'; Schacter, *Seven Sins of Memory*; Wertsch, 'Collective Memory'.

[4] Alexander, 'The Relational Imaginary of M.G. Vassanji's A Place Within'; Eakin, *How Our Lives Become Stories, Making Selves*; Friedman, 'Women's Autobiographical Selves'; Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Life-Writing*.

[5] In the case of autobiography studies, see Boehmer, *Stories of Women*; Clough, *Mau Mau Memoirs*; Holden, *Autobiography and Decolonization*; Majeed, *Autobiography, Travel and Postnational Identity*; Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Life-Writing*; Whitlock, *Intimate Empire*; Whitlock, *Postcolonial Life Narrative*, and in the case of memory studies, see Buettner, *Europe after Empire*; Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*; Schwarz, *The White Man's World*; Uusihakala, 'Memory Meanders'.

[6] Bailkin, 'Where Did the Empire Go?', 891–92; Bailkin, *Afterlife of Empire*; Buettner, *Europe after Empire*.

> *identity* was ideally adapted to talking about the relationship of the individual to society as that perennial problem presented itself to Americans at mid-century. More specifically, *identity* promised to elucidate a new kind of conceptual linkage between the two elements of the problem, since it was used in reference to, and dealt with the relationship of, the individual personality and the ensemble of social and cultural features that gave different groups their distinctive character.[7]

While I am more interested in people's understanding of their character than in the character as such, it is also this 'conceptual linkage' between the individual and society that informs this thesis. Gleason himself and later Frederick Cooper and Rogers Brubaker have rightly pointed to the overuse and resultant flattening of the meaning of 'identity'. While some use the term in an essentialist fashion, as though there is such a thing as 'the British identity', others see it as 'constructed, fluid and multiple', and very few register an awareness of the conceptual vagueness.[8] As Cooper and Brubaker argue, our analyses might be better off by using a more differentiated vocabulary that allows us to distinguish between, say, self-identification and identification by others, between having traits in common and feeling like a group. However, identity is so central to how memory, autobiography and postcolonial nationalism have been theorised that it can hardly be avoided. But to clarify, I use the term in a non-essentialist way, not to refer to something inherent in a group or a person, but as shorthand for self-understanding or self-image, be it on the individual or the collective level. Often I prefer to write of 'narratives of identity' as it is the way these self-images are narrated which interests me.

Identity and narrative have, indeed, become almost interchangeable in many disciplines.[9] Drawing on the past, stories are a way of making sense

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[7] Gleason, 'Identifying Identity', 926, italics in original.
[8] Cooper and Brubaker, 'Identity', 59.
[9] Bruner, 'Life as Narrative', 15; Bruner, 'Self-Making Narratives', 213, 222; Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 96–110; Eakin, *How Our Lives Become Stories, Making Selves*, 100–101; McAdams, 'Personality, Modernity, and the Storied Self', 297.

of one's self in the present and to others. This illustrates the close connection between memory, narrative and identity. It is the relationship between these three constituent parts that often makes for (too) easy analogy between individual and collective memories and identities. Collectives like nations also share stories about the past to articulate what characterises them in the present.[10] In this thesis, I do not want to propose that identity construction through narratives about the past is identical on the levels of individuals and collectives, but rather to point out the close dialogue between those levels. Here, it is helpful to consider Stuart Hall's remarks about the historical contingency of identity narratives and the role of social surroundings in their construction:

> identity is not only a story, a narrative we tell about ourselves; it is a set of stories that change with historical circumstances, and identity shifts with the way in which we think, hear and experience them. Far from only coming from the still small point of truth inside us, identities actually come from outside; they are the way in which we are recognized and then come to step into the place of the recognitions others give us. Without others there is no self, there is no self-recognition.[11]

It is the relationship between individual stories of self and historically contingent narratives that surround us that I want to explore in this thesis. While Hall emphasises the stories of others about oneself, I consider also the stories societies tell about themselves and how individuals navigate in the changing narrative terrain of a society's understanding of itself and its past.[12]

The conceptual framework in terms of memory and autobiography studies will be dealt with in chapter two, whereas in this introductory chapter, I will consider the historiographical landscape of decolonisation. I

[10] Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 134–35; Olick and Robbins, 'Social Memory Studies', 122–26.
[11] Hall, 'Negotiating Caribbean Identities', 30.
[12] As we will see in the next chapter, this should not be understood as though there is a 'group mind' which carries out such collective storytelling but rather as culturally circulated and contested narratives.

will look firstly at debates about how to conceive of decolonisation to argue that it does indeed make sense to examine three so disparate contexts as Australia, the Anglophone Caribbean and Zimbabwe alongside one another. Secondly, I will sketch the paths towards decolonisation of these three contexts and the way in which decolonisation has been accompanied by concerted efforts to tell new narratives to prop up independent nationhood. This will allow for a comparison between the level of collective remembrance and the individual level of the autobiography which will form the central part of this thesis. In the final part of this introduction, I will present the chapters and my rationale for the selection of and approach to the sources.

Narrating Decolonisation

The past decade has seen scholarly interventions concerning the way we should conceive and deploy the concept of decolonisation. This includes 'rethinking' what countries fit within a decolonisation framework, considering where the decolonisation terminology originates as well as questioning the teleology within which the end of empire is often narrated.[13] Stephen Howe has pointed out an apparent paradox in the study of the moment of decolonisation. On the one hand, he argues, it is routinely neglected as an object of study in postcolonial criticism especially in literary and cultural studies despite its importance to the phenomena ostentatiously under scrutiny. At the same time, it has assumed such enormous proportions as *the* watershed moment of twentieth century imperial history that historians have neglected to examine the continuities of the world system before and after decolonisation as well as the way in which decolonisation was not always clear-cut. In both cases, what is being challenged, according to Howe, is the way the story of decolonisation is told and what place it holds in larger narratives of the twentieth century.[14]

[13] Cooper and Stoler, *Tensions of Empire*, 407; Hopkins, 'Rethinking Decolonization'; Ward, 'The European Provenance of Decolonization'.
[14] Howe, 'Crosswinds and Countercurrents'.

Debating the historiography on decolonisation in Zimbabwe, Luise White has recently criticised the tendency to reduce the story of the area known variously as Southern Rhodesia, Rhodesia, Zimbabwe-Rhodesia and Zimbabwe to 'a before-and-after that literally makes the past a prologue,' as Rhodesia becomes a 'racist anomaly': 'an exception to the natural order that was decolonization, an interruption that slowed down the history of what should have happened.'[15] She points to problems with nomenclature as these four entities are 'collapsed into two – Rhodesia and Zimbabwe' just like some historians speak of Rhodesia as colonial Zimbabwe, which serves, she says, 'to change its history, to return clumsy governance and messy episodes to the normal, linear story of colony to nation.'[16] By focusing on its many names and its awkward history, White seeks to complicate the story of Rhodesian/Zimbabwean independence.

However, while White's attention to the specificities of the local situation is laudable, perhaps by dismissing the term 'decolonisation' she risks throwing the baby out with the bathwater. As A. G. Hopkins argues, we need to consider more rather than fewer contexts within the purview of 'decolonisation'. Hopkins' intervention relates specifically to how the settler colonies also went through processes that we may recognise from countries traditionally thought of as having decolonised: they responded to the same global changes and went through a similar process of invention of new symbols of nationality such as flags, anthems and currency. Although, as Hopkins acknowledges, there are significant differences between colonies of conquest and settler colonies, there are also, he suggests, patterns which recur across the board.[17] While Rhodesia/Zimbabwe sits uneasily with both Dominion and colonial status, it may be possible to offer a synthesis of White and Hopkins. By including a place like Rhodesia/Zimbabwe within our frame of analysis of decolonisation, what we achieve is not necessarily the reduction of the complexity of its history to an already established

[15] White, *Unpopular Sovereignty*, 1–2.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Hopkins, 'Rethinking Decolonization'.

schema, but rather a challenge to that schema which asks us to consider the haphazard nature of the decolonising process across the empire.

As we will see, it is equally difficult to pin down the one moment of decolonisation for Australia[18] and the island states of the English-speaking Caribbean. Emblematically, the Australian High Court gave up fixing the date of formal independence in Australia, setting it between 1901 and 1986.[19] In a Caribbean context, one might ask whether the significant turning point towards independence was self-government, Federation or full independence, or even earlier, less clear cut moments such as the industrial unrest of the 1930s or the introduction of full adult suffrage in the 1940s-50s.[20] Indeed, in her study of Barbados, Mary Chamberlain argues that Caribbean decolonisation 'was always a messier business than simple chronologies allow' and sets out to investigate the 'messy, multiple stories of how a colony progressed to a nation.'[21] While Zimbabwe's history of decolonisation is particularly nebulous and complex, that indeterminacy may actually be instructive in alerting us to the complexities of all decolonisation histories. Viewed in this way, we may recognise how no country fits the overarching schema in every detail but how they all share similarities that make it useful to consider them alongside one another.

More important, perhaps, than a shared chronological confusion, what these contexts have in common is the role of discursive and narrative changes in the transition from colonial to independent status. In each case, formal constitutional changes are inseparable from the local and global discussions about the legitimacy of empire. And in each case, decolonisation has been accompanied by new representations of nationhood and collective

[18] While J. G. A. Pocock has rightly criticised the use of 'decolonisation' for settler colonies on the basis that settlers were colonists, not colonised, and so could not be decolonised, the other suggestions as to how we might term the end of empire in these areas have also failed. Thus, Jim Davidson's 'de-dominionisation' has never caught on, perhaps because, as he grants himself, '[t]he word is an ugly one'. Davidson, 'De-Dominionisation Revisted', 108; Davidson, 'The De-Dominionisation of Australia'; Pocock, 'The Neo-Britains and the Three Empires', 194. Here, I will often use 'end of empire' or 'loosening of the imperial ties' rather than 'decolonisation'. However, I maintain that it makes sense to place Australia within the global decolonisation framework of the second half of the twentieth century, not least, as we will see, because of the narrative developments in that country.

[19] Hudson and Sharp, *Australian Independence*.

[20] Chamberlain, *Empire and Nation-Building in the Caribbean*; Schwarz, 'Crossing the Seas', 6–7.

[21] Chamberlain, *Empire and Nation-Building in the Caribbean*, 20.

self-awareness – often under the rubric of 'national identity'. Indeed, it is possible to identify a proliferation of narratives about the nation and its colonial and decolonising past.

To begin with the debates about the legitimacy of empire, a number of historians have explained decolonisation as a global phenomenon brought about by a shift in the way empire was perceived after the Second World War.[22] This was related to the increasing prominence of human rights discourse after the establishment of the United Nations, the moral bankruptcy of racialism in the wake of the defeat of Nazism and the Wilsonian doctrine of self-determination which, while it had been current since the 1919 Paris peace process, gained new potency after the War.[23] Taken together, we can see these developments as changes to the discursive parameters within which narratives of empire and nationhood could be told. Coming up against crises like the Algerian War and the Congo Crisis, empire became increasingly difficult to defend for metropolitan powers. As more and more countries gained independence from the late 1950s, it was possible to point to established patterns and precedents and colonial nationalists were able to construct convincing visions of independent futures, placing their own country within a larger story of resistance to colonial rule. Anti-colonial activists travelled the world and drew inspiration from how the struggle against empire was carried out and articulated in other places.[24] In the works of intellectuals like Franz Fanon and George Padmore, this critical narrative of empire was crystallised into theories about repression and resistance, about the damaging effects of colonialism on colonisers and colonised alike.[25] These ideas were later taken up and developed within postcolonial studies, emerging as a field in the late 1970s with the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* which examined Western representations of the East and initiated a school of thought which sought to

[22] Darwin, *End of the British Empire*, 199–122; Robinson, 'The Moral Disarmament of African Empire 1919–1947', 100–101; Shipway, *Decolonization and Its Impact*, 13.
[23] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*; Shipway, *Decolonization and Its Impact*, 11–13.
[24] Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment*, 12–13; Scalmer, *Gandhi in the West*, 4–8; Schwarz, 'Crossing the Seas', 13–18; Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*, 69–70.
[25] Polsgrove, *Ending British Rule in Africa*; Schwarz, *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*.

challenge precisely this representational framework.[26] As we will see, early anti-colonial arguments as well as later postcolonialist ones inform the writing of a number of the autobiographers who draw on them to articulate their own past experience. These authors need not themselves be students of postcolonial high theory in order to be affected by the discursive changes that have also played out within the academy.

In addition to this global conversation about empire, there was also the local development of new narratives about the nation. In this respect, Australia, the Caribbean island states and Zimbabwe are like many new nations. A number of historians of decolonisation have described the efforts of political and cultural actors alike to give shape to a new understanding of the collective through new narratives of the past and present.[27] In this, they draw on ideas from theorists of nationalism such as Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger and their emphasis on the importance of narratives about a shared past for sustaining 'imagined communities'.[28] The emotional glue of the British Empire had been the idea of a common Britishness. This 'global civic idea' conceived of imperial subjects across the world as belonging to a community linked through shared values like liberty, respectability, fair play and the rule of law as well as shared characteristics like the English language and, to some people, the 'British race'.[29] While the

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[26] In this study, I use 'postcolonial' to refer to the field of academic criticism known as 'postcolonial studies' along with the discourses that surround it, so that a society may be described as 'postcolonial' when referring to the prominence of a sceptical approach to the imperial past and the mindset with which it is associated. The term 'post-colonial' will be used as a strictly chronological marker, i.e. 'after colonialism'. However, to avoid confusion, I prefer the term 'after empire'. See also Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 3.

[27] Belich, *Paradise Reforged*; Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*; Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*; Lambert, '"An Unknown People"'; Ranger, 'Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation'.

[28] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*; Indeed, Hobsbawm argues that 'when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which "old" traditions had been designed,' new rituals and institutions are invented which draw on 'ancient materials to construct invented traditions of a novel type for quite novel purposes.' Hobsbawm, 'Inventing Traditions', 4–6. On the importance of history for nationalism and nation-building, see also Carvalho and Gemenne, *Nations and Their Histories*.

[29] Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*; Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*; Damm Pedersen, 'African Decolonisation and the Fate of Britishness C. 1945-1975'; Darian-Smith, Grimshaw, and Macintyre, *Britishness Abroad*; Gikandi, 'The Embarrassment of Victorianism'; Mercau, 'War of the British Worlds: The Anglo-Argentines and the Falklands'; Ward, 'Imperial Identities Abroad'.

actual traits that people associated with Britishness differed depending on local circumstances, the notion that they belonged to a global community of Britons was sustained in a number of locales through education, cultural products, public rituals of loyalty to the monarchy and celebrations of the imperial project past, present and future.[30] With decolonisation, these ideas lost their explanatory power and emotional purchase. In academic circles, the dissolution of empire saw an explosion in the number of local area studies journals and history departments created new courses and chairs in national history.[31] And in the cultural sphere, artistic expression like literature, theatre and art as well as institutions like museums, broadcasting services and the Mint went through energetic casting about for new independent forms.[32]

It is particularly the overhaul of the symbolic paraphernalia of nationhood that leads Hopkins to conclude that we may usefully consider the old settler colonies within a decolonisation framework. New Zealand, Australia, Canada and South Africa[33] discarded anthems, currencies and honours systems with imperial connotations and substituted them with new, national versions, often under heated debate about what could be said to symbolise the nation and about the rather constructed nature of the entire exercise. Hopkins even argues that such

> ceremonial exchanges marked the end of long-established connections between the old dominions and Britain […] in ways that in some respects were more profound than the achievement of formal independence was for the colonies because they involved the destruction of the core concept of Britishness, which had given unity

[30] Darian-Smith, Grimshaw, and Macintyre, *Britishness Abroad*; Gorman, *Imperial Citizenship*; Rush, *Bonds of Empire*; Thompson, 'The Languages of Loyalism in Southern Africa, C. 1870–1939'; Ward, 'Imperial Identities Abroad'.
[31] Aldrich and Ward, 'Ends of Empire', 260–61; Cooper, 'Conflict and Connection', 1519–21.
[32] Craggs and Wintle, *Cultures of Decolonisation*; Higman, *A Concise History of the Caribbean*, 119; 182; 185; 242; Moore, 'Leisure and Society in Postemancipation Guyana', 117; Ward, *British Culture and the End of Empire*.
[33] This group of countries is often referred to as 'Greater Britain'. Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*; Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain*; Seeley, *The Expansion of England*; Ward, 'Imperial Identities Abroad'.

> and vitality to Greater Britain overseas, and the creation of new national identities.[34]

Curran and Ward challenge Hopkins' interpretation that this led to the 'creation of new national identities' and argue instead that the 'dwindling resonance of Britishness' was followed by frustrated strives for, rather than successful discovery of, a 'new identity' and indeed by a widespread perception that an 'identity void' had descended on the body politic.[35] But irrespective of whether such casting about for a new way to describe the national 'we' was successful or not, the era saw intense narrative efforts to fashion national stories out of an imperial past. As Hopkins demonstrates, such revisions at the symbolic level were central to the decolonisation process across the British Empire.[36] In settler colonies, frontier myths and patriotic ideas about attachment to the land had long given a sense of pride, but had not seriously competed with, but rather confirmed, the idea of the white populations as Britons overseas.[37] As the imperial ties loosened and nationalism came on the political agenda, politicians and the intelligentsia promoted narratives of a distinctive, non-British identity. In colonies ruled by a small white minority, local anti-colonial activists and people engaged in transnational movements like Pan-Africanism had for some decades invoked ideas about a shared, pre-colonial past to justify their cause and provide their followers with a sense of shared identity over time and a vision for the future.[38] Provided with the state apparatus, nationalists leaders of newly independent countries were now able to institutionalise such narratives through school curricula, museums, commemorative events, the naming of places and institutions, and through the creation of new national symbols like flags and anthems.

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[34] Hopkins, 'Rethinking Decolonization', 215.
[35] Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*, 15–25.
[36] Hopkins, 'Rethinking Decolonization', 211.
[37] Ibid., 218; Meaney, 'Britishness and Australian Identity', 83.
[38] Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature*, 105; Gikandi, 'Pan-Africanism and Cosmopolitanism'; Jewsiewicki and Mudimbe, 'Africans' Memories and Contemporary History of Africa'.

When we consider the pathways out of empire of the three contexts studied in this thesis, Australia, the English-speaking Caribbean and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, it will become clear that while the loosening of the formal bonds to Britain could seem very different, in each case it was accompanied by efforts to tell the story of the nation anew. As I will demonstrate in the following chapters, this memory work at the level of the collective has its counterpart in the way individuals recall their lives in end of empire autobiographies. But first, let us briefly consider each of the three regions included in this study and how, in each case, the formal dissolution of imperial ties involved cultural memory work through the development of new narratives of national identity.

Three Contexts

Australia

As a federation of white settler colonies, Australia had long enjoyed a large and ever-growing degree of self-determination within the Empire. At Federation in 1901, the six self-governing colonies formed a single national government. The 1942 adoption of the Statute of Westminster ended many of the constitutional links with Britain and in 1986 the final formal ties to the British parliament were cut. In the 1960s, talk of 'decolonisation' thus held little sway in a country that had long since taken charge of its own affairs. And yet, the 1960s saw a significant shift in the emotional links to the metropole. This was brought about by a number of events. The British bid to join the EEC in 1961 was understood in Australia as a rejection of the Commonwealth as the primary sphere of British trade.[39] The accelerated withdrawal of the British engagements east of Suez announced in 1968 strengthened the sense, growing since the Fall of Singapore in 1942, that Australian national safety was perhaps better ensured by the Americans than by the British.[40] And the 1962 Commonwealth Immigrants Act, while

[39] Although the United Kingdom did not join the EEC until 1973, the application caused much dismay in Australia. See Ward, *Australia and the British Embrace*, 99–119.
[40] Kristensen, '"In Essence Still a British Country"'.

targeted towards keeping non-white Commonwealth citizens out of Britain, made Australians subject to immigration control, and was taken as an insult to the idea of a shared Britishness.[41] Gradually and perhaps reluctantly, Australians came to accept a wholly independent destiny for their country.[42]

As Britain ended many of its imperial engagements, Australians started formulating a so-called 'new nationalism'.[43] The ambition of politicians and intellectuals was to foster a sense of a 'distinctly Australian' identity, not premised on attachments to Britain so much as to the land and local tradition by building up the arts scene and promoting new national symbols such as anthems and national holidays.[44] The 1960s-80s were a time of ostentatious striving for a new national identity, with attachment to the land often substituting a now redundant imagined community of Britons, and a concerted, if incomplete, overhaul of the symbols of empire. This ambition frequently fell foul of scepticism towards the newness of the invented national symbols and a sense that nationalism with all its connotations of jingoism was morally suspect.[45] However, in spite of these difficulties, there was a sudden interest in what it meant to be Australian and a perceived need to strengthen institutions and rituals which could give expression to a distinct identity. Australia was reorienting itself as an Asia-Pacific country that had fought the Vietnam War without following Britain's lead, the bicentenary of the landing of the First Fleet was approaching and in the cultural sphere, historians as well as film directors were rethinking the way in which Australian history should be told.[46]

An important part of the refashioning of Australian identity narratives was a thorough revision of the way the recent imperial past was remembered. This found its expression in altered school curricula and

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[41] Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*; Paul, 'Communities of Britishness: Migration in the Last Gasp of Empire'.
[42] Meaney, 'Britishness and Australian Identity', 89.
[43] Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*; Goldsworthy, *Losing the Blanket*, 138.
[44] Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*, 163–223; Ward, 'Projecting Post-Imperial Australia', 54.
[45] Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*, 73; 181; Horne, *Time of Hope*, 155; Meaney, 'Britishness and Australian Identity', 89; Meaney, '"In History"s Page': Identity and Myth', 383.
[46] Clark, *A History of Australia.*; Ward, 'Projecting Post-Imperial Australia'; White, *Inventing Australia*.

university programmes where Australian history gained new recognition.[47] Traditions formerly associated with Empire, such as Anzac Day marking Australian participation in the First World War, suffered years of unpopularity before being revived as peculiarly Australian rather than imperial.[48] Even the country's indigenous heritage, which had been under sustained attack and neglect in the settler colony, was suddenly mined as source for a distinctly Australian identity.[49] Such moves reflected concerns that Australia was too young to have a proper identity, lacking the roots solidly grounded in deep time that ought to give a country its sense of direction. As Curran and Ward phrase it, 'Australians were in thrall to a romantic view of what their nationalism *ought* to be.'[50]

One way of grounding the new nationalism more firmly was to reinterpret past Australian patriotism as an independent nationalism, critical of the imperial relationship. Thus, an outpouring of history writing adressed Australia's 'thwarted nationalism'. Criticising this 'Radical National' historiography of 1970s-1990s, Neville Meaney suggests it has 'sought to create a new exclusive nationalist history written against Britain and its betrayals.'[51] Because of an uncritical acceptance of 'nationalism's own teleological view of history', he argues that 'there has been a tendency to assume that European Australians have been engaged from early in their history in an inexorable struggle for national independence.'[52] By contrast, Meaney as well as Curran and Ward insist that Australia's history was rather one of 'thwarted Britishness' and cite evidence that the loosening of the imperial ties was not fundamentally instigated by Australians themselves. With Hobsbawm and Ranger's phrase, we may interpret the nationalist

[47] White, *Inventing Australia*, 169.
[48] Beaumont, 'The Anzac Legend', 175–76; McKenna, 'Anzac Day: How Did It Become Australia's National Day?', 131–34.
[49] Attwood, *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History*, 17–25. As Attwood demonstrates, this has been a contested process which also involved a backlash against 'black armband history' from the mid-1980s onwards in 'History Wars' about how the country's Aboriginal and settler past should be interpreted.
[50] Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*, 255, italics in original.
[51] Meaney, 'Britishness and Australia', 124–25. This concern with betrayal is one which I will consider in the Zimbabwean context when I study Ian Smith's political memoir which interestingly shares its title with one of the Australian histories criticised by Meaney, David Day's *The Great Betrayal*.
[52] Meaney, 'Britishness and Australian Identity', 76; 78.

historiography as an attempt at 'invented tradition', striving to lend the gravitas of history to the essentially novel phenomenon of independent Australian nationalism.[53] As we will see, Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Jill Ker Conway, Russel Ward and Patrick White are highly influenced by these changes to the parameters of national identification, even as several of them stress their position as lone or avant-garde Australian nationalists.

The Anglophone Caribbean

In the Caribbean, too, decolonisation unfolded in stops and starts and was accompanied by intense cultural production and narrative reconfiguration. Established as plantation colonies based on African slave labour, the British West Indies remained under white minority rule and British administration until after the Second World War. Small numbers of black and coloured subjects had by then been able to elevate their social and economic standing through education and by subscribing to British derived cultural norms. This created a racially mixed middle class looking to the metropole as the source of status and self-worth, some of whom used their Britishness to back claims for democratic rights.[54] While there were widespread riots in the 1930s which were important for showing West Indians and Britons alike that there was dissatisfaction with colonial rule and the potential for mobilisation against it, Chamberlain argues that, 'with the exception of a political vanguard, there was little popular articulation of an anti-colonial struggle'.[55] More important in formulating an anti-colonial stance, she suggests, was the momentum around the federal idea which built up before, during and after the Second World War, 'the brainchild of the intellectual or political elite, most of which lived, or had lived, overseas.'[56] West Indian independence came without wars of liberation, and Higman and

[53] Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*, 255–56; Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*.
[54] Higman, *A Concise History of the Caribbean*, 119, 182, 185, 212, 242; Howe, 'C. L. R. James', 160–61; Moore, 'Leisure and Society in Postemancipation Guyana', 117; Putnam, *Radical Moves*, 147–50; Rush, *Bonds of Empire*, 11–12, 102–16.
[55] Chamberlain, *Empire and Nation-Building in the Caribbean*, 184.
[56] Ibid., 12–13, 157–59, 184–87.

Chamberlain even speak of the comparative British eagerness to get rid of the islands.[57] In 1958, a West Indies Federation was set up, but by 1961 it had already failed. The larger islands withdrew from the Federation, essentially taking away the economic basis for a state, and Jamaica, Trinidad and Barbados (where the authors in this study come from) became independent between 1962 and 1966.

The agenda for independence arose in a transatlantic dialogue between the Caribbean, Britain and the US where West Indian migrants were redefining national and regional identities in an attempt to foster a pan-Caribbean identity.[58] Like the search for a new national identity in Australia, in the Caribbean the era witnessed a surge of innovation and invention, as the newly independent island states each sought to extricate their civic cultures from the trappings of empire.[59] Chamberlain describes the efforts in literature, art, theatre and sport towards the development of 'a distinctive Caribbean voice'.[60] Contemporary critics saw the 'new national literature […] as integral to the aspirations of the English-speaking Caribbean and its struggle for independence and identity.'[61] As Bridget Brereton says, '[p]olitical decolonization was accompanied by a remarkable cultural renaissance, an upsurge of popular creativity that developed a new cultural identity which was Creole and national in orientation.'[62]

Part of this burgeoning of the cultural sphere was also the development of new national histories. 'Every age rewrites history,' Eric Williams, future prime minister of independent Trinidad wrote in 1943 in the preface to his ground-breaking *Capitalism and Slavery*, and continued, 'but particularly ours, which has been forced by events to re-evaluate our conceptions of history and economic and political development.'[63] By the time of independence, anti-colonial activists had been using history to

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[57] Ibid., 159; Higman, *A Concise History of the Caribbean*, 267.
[58] Chamberlain, *Empire and Nation-Building in the Caribbean*; Putnam, *Radical Moves*; Schwarz, *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*.
[59] Hall, 'Negotiating Caribbean Identities'.
[60] Chamberlain, *Empire and Nation-Building in the Caribbean*, 130. See e.g. Brathwaite, *History of the Voice*.
[61] Harney, *Nationalism and Identity*, 4.
[62] Brereton, *A History of Modern Trinidad 1783-1962*, 223.
[63] Williams, *Capitalism & Slavery*, vii.

provide alternative visions of the islands for some decades. Already with his 1938 history of the Haitian revolution, *Black Jacobins*, C. L. R. James had demonstrated that Caribbean islanders could be seen as the agents of their own history, rather than as somebody that history 'happened to'. Yet this development gathered pace after decolonisation.[64] Looking back at her own history curriculum in mid-1960s' Jamaica, Brereton notes that 'over the last fifty years there has been a genuine explosion in high-quality historical research and publication on the Caribbean.'[65]

The new engagement with the past extended beyond history writing to museums as well. Alissandra Cummins argues that these had, in colonial times, served 'to engender amongst local audiences a sense of loyalty for a collective colonial identity'.[66] While Cummins, director of the Barbados Museum & Historical Society, argues that the process of post-empire innovation was slow and underfunded – confined in many places to the renaming of museums, with 'Royal' museums becoming 'National' – she does note a general historiographical change.[67] She argues that '[n]ew national leaders and administrations sought strategic mechanisms to "invent traditions" specific to each country's historical and cultural experience, while inculcating values supportive of nationalist ideologies within a consciously constructed past.'[68] On many levels, then, Caribbean decolonisation involved new cultural productions and critical engagement with the colonial past. For C. L. R. James, George Lamming and Joyce Gladwell, this was a process still underway as they wrote their memoirs in the early 1960s, while Austin Clarke wrote his memoir in the 1980s, at a time when the empire was more clearly 'past tense'. Each in their own way, the authors situate their personal narratives within these broader narrative changes and provide critical commentary on colonial legacies.

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[64] Cummins, 'Caribbean Museums and National Identity', 237.
[65] Brereton, 'Inside/Outside: A Non-Native Caribbeanist's Journey', 62.
[66] Cummins, 'Caribbean Museums and National Identity', 235.
[67] Ibid., 236–37.
[68] Ibid., 236. Note once again the echo of Hobsbawm and Ranger.

Rhodesia/Zimbabwe

Southern Rhodesia was never a colony in the traditional sense. Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company took possession of the area in 1890 by Royal Charter and despite African uprisings, the area remained company-owned for decades. The political influence of white settlers grew gradually and in 1923, Southern Rhodesia became a self-governing colony under British rule.[69] Thirty years later, it entered into the short-lived Central African Federation together with Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. However, as the other two members of the federation moved to majority rule in the early 1960s and became Zambia and Malawi respectively, the government of Rhodesia – now dropping the 'Southern' in the absence of a northern counterpart – was intent on keeping power for the white minority. While highly popular among Rhodesian whites, this policy was neither well received by black nationalists, the international community nor in Britain where the global context of decolonisation made the entrenchment of white rule highly controversial. [70] The British government insisted that independence could not be granted without signs of progress towards majority rule.[71] On Armistice Day of 1965, convinced that no agreement could be made, the Rhodesian Front government led by Ian Smith made a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Britain. This was followed by economic sanctions from Britain and large sections of the international community.[72]

While white Rhodesia grew increasingly isolated, a rhetoric of superior Rhodesianness, of fighting against the odds for the freedom of all the 'free world' grew in strength.[73] Hitherto, the idea that white Rhodesians were the most loyal Britons in the Empire had been a mainstay of Rhodesian civic

[69] Lowry, 'Rhodesia 1890–1980'; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 'Mapping Cultural and Colonial Encounters, 1880s-1930s'.
[70] British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan's 'Wind of Change' speech in South Africa in 1960 has come to be seen as a turning point in British attitudes to white settlers in Africa, marking a new commitment to the transition to majority rule. See Butler and Stockwell, *The Wind of Change*.
[71] Mlambo, 'From the Second World War to UDI, 1940-1965', 110.
[72] Mtisi, Nyakudya, and Barnes, 'Social and Economic Developments During the UDI Period'.
[73] White, 'The Utopia of Working Phones'.

culture. However, as Donal Lowry observes, '[f]ollowing UDI, with their loyalty unrequited and Britain no longer seemingly resembling the metropolis of their ideals, it became increasingly difficult for the bulk of white Rhodesians to identify themselves convincingly as British.'[74] In a country where the majority of the white population had been born elsewhere and where there was a high turnover rate of return migrants, much work was done to shore up the idea of a distinctive Rhodesian identity, particularly as international pressure and black protests combined to question the legitimacy of white rule.[75] As the *Rhodesia Herald* observed, the country needed to acquire the trappings of nationhood 'to fill a void in our national life'.[76] Yet this was not altogether successful. Indeed, White suggests that '[w]ith UDI, Rhodesia became a place defined by what it was not, not by what it was.'[77]

From the early 1960s, protests against unfair land laws and lack of parliamentary representation for the black population grew in force. As police responded with rough justice to boycotts and demonstrations, these developed into scenes of violence which over the next decades escalated into guerrilla warfare. In the subsequent war, the liberation movement was divided into several internally warring factions, the strongest of which were ZAPU, led by Joshua Nkomo, and ZANU, eventually taken over by Robert Mugabe.[78] While they negotiated the 1979 Lancaster House agreement for a ceasefire and independence together under the banner of Patriotic Front, unity soon broke down.[79] The parties fought the first elections in a new Zimbabwe as ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU, and Mugabe's victorious party has remained in power ever since. These divisions would sow the seeds for later disputes over power and accusations of betrayal in independent Zimbabwe. Similarly, the Lancaster House agreement was reached in haste and left

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[74] Lowry, 'Rhodesia 1890–1980', 117–18.
[75] Brownell, 'The Hole in Rhodesia's Bucket', 592; Godwin and Hancock, *Rhodesians Never Die*, 16; Lowry, 'Rhodesia 1890–1980', 122–23.
[76] *Rhodesia Herald*, 27-8 August 1974, quoted in Godwin and Hancock, *Rhodesians Never Die*, 145.
[77] White, 'The Utopia of Working Phones', 106.
[78] Mtisi, Nyakudya, and Barnes, 'War in Rhodesia, 1965-1980'.
[79] Ibid., 162–66; White, *Assassination of Herbert Chitepo*, 5.

issues like land redistribution unresolved, providing 'material for contest in the post-colonial era.' [80]

The first decade saw advances in education and standards of living, and Mugabe was followed optimistically by many observers in the West for the first years of his reign.[81] Rhodesian names of roads and public buildings were replaced 'with nationalist-oriented ones' and a number of national holidays were introduced celebrating independence and veterans. [82] However, the divisions between ZANU-PF and PF-ZAPU continued and the governing party used its position of power for selective memorialisation which de-emphasised ZAPU's role in the liberation war.[83] After attacks from 'dissenters' in the ZAPU-friendly region of Matabeleland which Nkomo was accused of orchestrating, the ZANU-PF associated Fifth Brigade carried out a massacre which claimed the lives of an estimated 20,000 people.[84] The years of government marginalisation of Nkomo and his party only ended with the 'Unity Accord' of 1987 which 'effectively emasculated the opposition.'[85] Yet when Nkomo wrote his memoir in 1984, he was still experiencing a heavy campaign of government antagonism.

New attempts at oppositional politics in the late 1990s were also met with repression and the past was enrolled in the effort to bolster support for Mugabe's increasingly unpopular rule. White farmers were forcibly evicted in a land redistribution scheme aimed at placating veterans from the liberation struggle. This involved 'a revival of anti-colonial rhetoric and a careful re-packaging of the land question not only as an economic issue but as a fundamental part of Zimbabwe's cultural heritage.'[86] The new 'patriotic history' celebrated the ruling party's role in the liberation war and positioned whites and the opposition as Western imperialists threatening

[80] Alexander and McGregor, 'War Stories', 81–82; Mtisi, Nyakudya, and Barnes, 'War in Rhodesia, 1965-1980', 166; Tendi, *Making History in Mugabe's Zimbabwe*, 144–72.
[81] Muzondidya, 'From Buoyancy to Crisis, 1980-1997', 167–69.
[82] Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 'Cultural Nationalism and the Politics of Commemoration', 949.
[83] Ibid., 6; Alexander and McGregor, 'War Stories'.
[84] Alexander, McGregor, and Ranger, *Violence & Memory*; Muzondidya, 'From Buoyancy to Crisis, 1980-1997', 179; Phimister, '"Zimbabwe Is Mine"'.
[85] Muzondidya, 'From Buoyancy to Crisis, 1980-1997', 179.
[86] Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 'Cultural Nationalism and the Politics of Commemoration', 9.

Zimbabwean unity.[87] Thus, some people were cast as illegitimate and foreign, and national belonging was reserved for 'loyal' Zimbabweans.[88] Ironically, as Mugabe has grown increasingly despotic, space for nostalgic recollections of the Rhodesian past has opened up in the West and among 'ex-Rhodesians'.[89] In different ways, the memoirs of Ian Smith, Alexandra Fuller and Peter Godwin cater to this nostalgic community.

The Thesis

In Australia, the Anglophone Caribbean and Zimbabwe, the end of empire has been accompanied by dramatic reinterpretations of the national past. While these changes have generally been examined on the level of the collective, it is the hypothesis of this thesis that such substantial changes to collective narratives cannot but affect how individuals perceive and recall their own past. In chapter two, I outline the conceptual framework which allows me to study the relationship between individual and collective memory at the end of empire.

To examine this relationship, I have chosen to focus on 13 published autobiographical writings of 11 authors. I label these texts 'end of empire autobiographies': texts whose authors were born before the onset of decolonisation and which were written during or after the end of empire. By including three disparate geographical contexts, the intention is to underline a subject and interpretative framework that is not constrained by the boundaries of 'area studies'. My aim is to illustrate both the shared patterns and the local specificities of end of empire recollections.

In the first two analytical chapters, I compare texts from the Anglophone Caribbean and Australia. In chapter three, I examine descriptions of colonial education in the autobiographies of the Caribbean

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[87] Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 'Cultural Nationalism and the Politics of Commemoration'; Raftopoulos, 'Nation, Race and History in Zimbabwean Politics', 165–68, 183–87; Ranger, 'Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation', 222.

[88] Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 'Cultural Nationalism and the Politics of Commemoration', 14; Raftopoulos, 'Nation, Race and History in Zimbabwean Politics', 167–68; Tendi, *Making History in Mugabe's Zimbabwe*, 144–72.

[89] Pilossof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*; Uusihakala, 'Memory Meanders'.

author Austin Clarke and the Australians Jill Ker Conway and Russel Ward. These school time memories are recalled as symbolic of imperial power and retrospectively associated with snobbery and alienation from one's local surroundings. I argue that the authors use the trope of the colonial education to position themselves in relation to a contemporary audience and signal their contemporary rejection of the aesthetics of empire. In chapter four, I study how journeys to the imperial metropole are used in hindsight to reflect upon one's own relationship to empire. In these stories, by Joyce Gladwell and George Lamming from the Caribbean and Kathleen Fitzpatrick and Patrick White from Australia, ideas of belonging are interrogated as authors reflect upon their unwelcoming reception in Britain. While there are striking similarities in their representations, the chapter also highlights specificities in their recollections as they are shaped by nationalist or anti-racist agendas.

While chapters three and four compare texts from Australia and the Anglophone Caribbean, chapters five and six compare texts relating to just one geographical context, namely Zimbabwe, and concentrate on two specific sub-genres, political and family memoirs. Whereas chapters three and four on autobiographies about the colonial era will focus on how individuals represent their personal relationship to empire and nation, chapters five and six look at how that relationship is mediated through communities. In chapter five, I examine the political memoirs of two prominent leaders of nationalist movements with very different political agendas, yet with a shared experience of losing the struggle for power. Ian Smith and Joshua Nkomo both stress their legitimacy by describing the moment of political awakening as a result of increasing pressure, representing themselves as speaking authoritatively for 'the people' and turning accusations of betrayal around to defend their own position as consistent while painting their adversaries as wayward and disloyal. Chapter six compares four family memoirs by Peter Godwin and Alexandra Fuller, both white Zimbabweans who live in the UK and the US. I argue that they use the lens of the family to retain a claim on Zimbabwe (and hence on its

narrativisation) and to soften the image of white settlers through family tragedy and nostalgia.

In selecting the texts for this study, I have looked for authors who are likely to function as bellwethers for the narrative reconstructions at the end of empire. This means that the study is focused on a particular subset of society who are in some sense preoccupied with the way the national story is told and who may also have expected to have a certain influence in shaping that story. Thus, most of these texts are by public intellectuals: historians, novelists, politicians and journalists. They are therefore not intended to be broadly representative of individual recollections of the imperial past. Rather, they belong to the political and intellectual elite who enjoyed the education and mobility which brought them into contact with imperial values and norms. For several of the autobiographers, their elite status means that they associate their upbringing with the inculcation of a middle-class Britishness. As part of the intelligentsia, the authors have also been more than usually attuned to the narrative changes which accompanied decolonisation, not least because they might entail the rejection of the very values with which they were brought up. A number of the autobiographers have themselves been part of this effort to tell the nation anew and we may interpret their life writing as contributions to that effort, in a different register. Each in their own way, and some more forcefully than others, they are what Dietmar Rothermund terms 'memorymakers who make distinct contributions to collective memory' by providing 'narratives, which confirm the social identity of the group to which they belong',[90] but who also, as I will demonstrate, reflect the existing narratives of their own surroundings. The self-selectiveness of the published autobiography, premised as it is on literacy and access to publication, means that a study such as this could never hope to examine the voice of 'the people' – to the extent that such an endeavour could ever be realised in empirical or methodological terms. Instead, what I aim to analyse is how people from the subsection of society

[90] Rothermund, 'Memories of Post-Imperial Nations', 2.

with the most outspoken involvement with the construction of collective memories choose to formulate their personal memories.

The Caribbean authors of this study are all partly or entirely of Afro-Caribbean background, whereas the Australian authors are all white descendants of British settlers. Obviously, this leaves out Anglo- and Indo-Caribbean voices as well as the perspective of indigenous and other non-Anglo-Celtic Australians. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to include the full demographic diversity without reducing the complexities of the different positions from which they engage with societal master narratives. As I am interested in the reflexivity of the relationship between individual and collective remembrance, I have chosen to focus on authors who have the cultural capital to influence collective narratives, and works that are in a privileged position to influence a mass readership. This includes the writers of the last two chapters, one black and one white leader of a political movement in Zimbabwe, and two white Zimbabweans who write from a Western expatriate position. While three of the authors thus come from the small white minority in Zimbabwe, this position does not prevent their participation in the construction of a story about colonial and post-colonial Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. Rather, it means that they have more access than most of the black majority in that country to the cultural and economic resources necessary to join such a conversation with any efficiency.

Given pressures similar to those that privilege elite and white authors' access to publication, there is also an overrepresentation of male voices in the archive of end of empire autobiographies. I have sought to include female voices, but in chapter five the focus on the genre of political leaders' memoirs means that the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions conspires to make the selection meagre indeed. While Judith Todd and Fay Chung have written fascinating memoirs about their participation in Zimbabwe's political movements, they do not hold the position which enables them to claim to speak for 'the people' and to place themselves at

the centre of events, which is what interests me in that chapter.[91] In my readings for this thesis, I have often been struck by the gender differences in the authors' preoccupations: women are often more concerned with intimate relations than are men, and women tend to write about gender inequality, while men do not. This aligns well with what feminist theorists of autobiography have observed.[92] While feminist historians of empire have documented important intersections of imperial and patriarchal orders, gender is not my focus in this thesis.[93] The role of gender and sexuality in postcolonial life writing has already been extensively explored in the work of Elleke Boehmer, Philip Holden, Bart Moore-Gilbert and Gillian Whitlock.[94] These critics have been instrumental to my way of thinking about postcolonial life writing, but I have been particularly inspired by their conceptualisation of the relationship between the individual and society – a relationship that this thesis aims to further disentangle.

A number of the autobiographers write from a different country than the country of their birth: Gladwell and Lamming write their accounts while still in Britain, Clarke has emigrated to Canada and Ker Conway, Godwin and Fuller all live in the United States, while Fitzpatrick and White have lived in Britain for several years. This illustrates the mobility of a cosmopolitan elite, but also the transnational nature of the Anglophone world. Imperial historians have suggested that we should think of the British Empire as a network in which the movement of goods, people and ideas was crucial to the sustenance of imperial power.[95] These networks have not disappeared with Empire but remain important in an increasingly globalised

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[91] Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga*; Todd, *The Right to Say No*; Todd, *Through the Darkness*.
[92] Friedman, 'Women's Autobiographical Selves'; Mason, 'The Other Voice'; Miller, 'Representing Others'.
[93] See for instance Levine, 'Gendering Decolonisation'; Stoler, *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power*; Woollacott, *Gender and Empire*. I have addressed gender in the writing of Jill Ker Conway elsewhere. See Rasch, 'A Postcolonial Education'.
[94] Boehmer, *Stories of Women*; Holden, *Autobiography and Decolonization*; Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Life-Writing*; Whitlock, *Intimate Empire*.
[95] These networks have been important on the administrative as well as the intimate level of empire. See for instance Anderson, *Subaltern Lives*; Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*; Boehmer, *Indian Arrivals*; Buettner, *Empire Families*; Darwin, *The Empire Project*; Laidlaw, *Colonial Connections 1815-45*; Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*; Magee and Thompson, *Empire and Globalisation*; Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London*.

world. Several students of memory have argued for the necessity of a comparative and transnational approach if we are to understand the frameworks within which the past is interpreted and communicated.[96] The authors of this study respond to the transnational circulation of ideas about empire and decolonisation and they address audiences which are dispersed around the globe. Placing them alongside each other enables their border-transcending similarities as well as their local specificities to emerge.

The decolonisation of the European empires was one of the major events of the twentieth century, prompting the redrawing of maps and the reinterpretation of ideas of community and belonging. The effects of this sea change on national narratives of identity have been studied by imperial and national historians as well as postcolonial literary critics. But these debates generally relate to the macro-level of international politics or 'national identity'. What I want to add is an understanding of how the end of empire is recalled and narrated by individuals. More to the point, I want to study how autobiographical practice offers writers at the end of empire an opportunity to position themselves in history in particular ways. I argue that individual recollection as it is articulated in this genre is caught up with changes to culturally circulated narratives about the past. Whether they adopt or resist shared narratives, end of empire autobiographers construct their own memories in dialogue with communities that have experienced large-scale upheaval. And like those communities, they try to make the past make sense in the present.

[96] Assmann and Conrad, *Memory in a Global Age*, 5; Bond and Rapson, *The Transcultural Turn*; Erll, 'Travelling Memory'; Levy and Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*; Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*; Ward and Holmes, 'Introduction: "Poison and Remedy"', 8–9; Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 10–11.

2
A Conceptual Framework: Memory, Autobiography and the Narrative Construction of Identity

The problems raised in the introduction can only be addressed satisfactorily through recourse to the conceptual tools of several fields. The new national narratives of identity described in the first chapter are constructions that draw on the collective past to give meaning to the present. Similarly, the individual identity articulation that we are presented with in an autobiography is also a narrative construction which draws on memories to create a sense of self in the present. In order to understand the relationship between changes in collective historical awareness and individual memory, we need to understand how memory works at individual as well as collective levels and how autobiographies can be read as a source for understanding the construction of identity through memory. Both memory and autobiography depend on narrative for the organisation of their material and both reflect individual and collective identities.

In the following, I will provide a conceptual framework for the thesis by examining how theoretical debates from the fields of memory and autobiography studies have conceived of the relationship between individual and collective memory and between autobiography and the world. I will start in the realm of memory, drawing on the work of psychologists, sociologists and historians, and then proceed to look at autobiography, examining the debates of narratological, poststructuralist, feminist and postcolonial critics about the relationship between the text and the world and its usefulness as a source for probing historical experience. In both cases, I will consider the role of narrative in constructing identity. This will enable us to see the way in which end of empire autobiographies may shed

light on how individual recollection responds to changes in collective narratives of identity in the wake of decolonisation.

Memory

It can be said for both the individual and the collective that memory gives a sense of coherence over time which is essential to identity. For the collective, sharing narratives about a common past creates a sense of unity in the present. For the individual, it involves a feeling that it is meaningful to speak of past and present selves as iterations of the same person, of the same identity. But individual and collective levels are inextricable in the sense that there is a social foundation to individual memory and collective memory exists only through the cognitive efforts of individuals. Here, I will deal first with collective memory, then look at individual memory before turning to the social foundation of individual memory.

Collective Memory

To be clear from the outset, 'collective memory' is not a favoured term even among its principal theorists. Ever since sociologist Maurice Halbwachs promoted the use of the term 'la mémoire collective' in his seminal work, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* in 1925, there has been confusion and contestation as to how it should be understood. Halbwachs argued that the past is always 'reconstructed on the basis of the present' and that individual recollection is only possible as the individual situates him/herself within 'collective frameworks'.[1] While some have taken this as a sensitivity to the social influences on individual thought, others have focused on what they see as a more radically collectivist strain in Halbwachs, as when he argues that such collective frameworks are 'the instruments used by the collective memory to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society.'[2] This seems to imply a capacity for thought which is not located in individual minds but in some sort of supra-

[1] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 39–40.
[2] Ibid., 40.

individual entity. As a consequence, Halbwachs' notion of collective memory has at times been taken as a radically Durkheimian idea of Society with agency of its own, independent of its members; what Jeffrey Olick calls 'anthropomorphized collectivities'.[3]

To avoid this confusion, another memory studies pioneer, psychologist Frederic Bartlett, found it necessary in 1932 to distinguish between 'memory in the group' and 'memory of the group'. He was highly sceptical of the latter but fully embraced the social determination of remembering.[4] Anthropologist James Wertsch makes a similar distinction between what he terms 'strong' and 'distributed' accounts of collective memory, opting for the latter and suggesting that we should think of remembering rather than memory, putting an emphasis on action and on the use of 'cultural tools' which mediate the way the past is remembered.[5] The continuing need to clarify that one does not imagine some detached group consciousness doing the collective memory led Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam to suggest abandoning the term in favour of greater precision. They argue that 'collective memory' is too vague and 'a clear sign of conceptual degeneration'.[6] They prefer instead that people use 'tradition', 'myth' and other concepts that do not carry connotations of a group mind. This may be an argument in favour of talking about 'cultural' instead of 'collective memory', provisionally defined by Astrid Erll as 'the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts.'[7] For the purposes of this thesis, the term 'collective memory' is useful because it encompasses both the memory work of small social groups, the cultural productions of memory as well as large scale narratives circulated in a society about a shared past, contributing to a sense of national community. However, the term will be employed alongside other terms such as 'cultural memory' and 'master narratives' and with sensitivity to the complexities involved in collective mnemonic practices.[8]

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[3] Olick, 'Collective Memory', 344; Gedi and Elam, 'Collective Memory — What Is It?', 34.
[4] Bartlett, *Remembering*, 294.
[5] Wertsch, 'Collective Memory', 118–20.
[6] Gedi and Elam, 'Collective Memory — What Is It?', 40.
[7] Erll, 'Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction', 2.
[8] The term 'master narrative' will be elaborated below.

Taking a kinder view on Halbwachs, Olick argues that the tension in Halbwachs' work is between studying the social setting of individual memory (retaining the capacity to remember to individuals) and studying collective commemorative phenomena such as narratives, rituals and technologies that can only develop in groups.[9] He argues that we should, like Halbwachs, not choose either one optic or the other, but instead see memory as at once located in individual brains, shaped by social conditions and taking place in groups in ways that cannot be reduced to the components of the group:

> There is no individual memory without social experience nor is there any collective memory without individuals participating in communal life. Thinking about remembering in this way demands that we overcome our inculcated tendency – as both social scientists and modern social actors – to see individual and society, in the words of Norbert Elias (1978), as separate things, 'like pots and pans.'[10]

Despite disagreements as to how to interpret Halbwachs and what terms to employ, there is, then, a consensus among many scholars to conceive of memory as fundamentally located in the cognitive processes of the individual mind, yet just as fundamentally carried out within a social context and mediated by cultural tools, which shape what is remembered. This study seeks to think together the individual and collective processes of memory, and how they are caught up with narrative and identity. While the levels are, as Olick reminds us, deeply interrelated, research into collective and individual memory have often been carried out in separate spheres. In this chapter, they will be treated separately, while pointing out their mutually constitutive nature, before turning the gaze to the social foundation of individual memory.

Collectives are involved in identity work through memory not only when there is agreement upon which version of the past should be favoured,

[9] Olick, 'Collective Memory', 334–35.
[10] Ibid., 346.

but also, and fiercely so, when different accounts of the past are in dispute. John Gillis notes the political nature of commemorative activity as it organises memories in a way 'whose results may appear consensual when they are in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and, in some instances, annihilation.'[11] Commemoration, in other words, is caught up with contestation.[12] Laying out a theoretical framework for the study of the identity politics of commemorations, Yael Zerubavel describes the conflict between 'master commemorative narratives' and 'countermemory' as one in which claims to represent the past accurately are employed in a political struggle between the political elite and its opposition.[13] In time, the dominant narrative may triumph and suppress its opposition, or the countermemory may increase in popularity and replace the master narrative. She argues that such tension invests collective memory with vitality and dynamism as it encourages active participation in commemorative activities on both sides.[14] This division into 'master' and 'counter' memories is fairly crude and may oversimplify very complex matters, but it enables us to focus our attention on the dynamic of what narratives of the past are in vogue and which ones are striving for attention, informing the mnemonic practices of a subset of the population.

Literary critic Michael Rothberg attacks the 'zero-sum view' often taken in such debates and argues that even in contestation, different accounts of the past build on and borrow from each other and are in dialogue with one another. With his idea of 'multidirectional memory', Rothberg wishes to demonstrate how even seemingly oppositional memories may productively draw on each other and, sometimes unwittingly, inspire one another. Rothberg's work springs from a rich tradition of Holocaust scholarship which has been important for the development of memory studies, in particular by discussing trauma.[15] Like Rothberg, other scholars

[11] Gillis, *Commemorations, the Politics of National Identity*, 5.
[12] Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 222–31.
[13] Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots*, 10–11.
[14] Ibid., 12.
[15] Caruth, *Trauma*; Felman and Laub, *Testimony*. This has included lively debates about whether the individual experience of trauma can usefully be adapted as metaphor for collective difficulties with working through the past. See e.g. Alexander et al., *Cultural*

are increasingly looking at the cross-fertilisation between Holocaust memory and other memories, including traumatic memories of colonialism.[16] The memories found in the autobiographies in this thesis are not generally traumatic ones, and when they are (in chapter six), they are not about colonialism but about family tragedies. As I will show, however, these are articulated in a way which moves attention away from the trauma of colonialism by focusing instead on white victims and even at one point comparing white Zimbabweans to persecuted Jews.

Stressing how Holocaust representations can 'facilitate transnational memory cultures', Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider propose that we should think of memory today as cosmopolitan. They argue that previous theorists of memory, in particular Pierre Nora, have been wrong in thinking of 'the nation state as the sole possible (and imaginable) source for the articulation of collective memories'.[17] A founding figure of memory studies, Nora argues that the 'acceleration of history' involves the dissolution of traditional forums for the maintenance of real memory and that in its stead, people are now frantically trying to preserve history in sites of memory, '*lieux de mémoire*', which he sets out to identify.[18] Nora's approach has been accused of focusing only on hexagonal France and ignoring the presence and influence of *France d'outre-mer*.[19] Levy and Sznaider also call for a view of memory that is less circumscribed by national borders. They propose that with globalisation 'different national memories are subjected to a common patterning. […] In each case, the new global narrative has to be reconciled with the old national narratives, and the result is always distinctive.'[20] The attention to the cross-fertilisation of memory and the transnational

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Trauma and Collective Identity; Crownshaw, *The Afterlife of Holocaust Memory in Contemporary Literature and Culture*; Kansteiner and Weilnböck, 'Against the Concept of Cultural Trauma'; LaCapra, *History and Memory After Auschwitz*.

[16] De Mul, 'The Holocaust as a Paradigm for the Congo Atrocities'; Hirsch and Spitzer, 'The Witness in the Archive', 163–65; Laursen, '"Telling Her a Story"'; Lloyd, 'Colonial Trauma/Postcolonial Recovery?'

[17] Levy and Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, 32.

[18] Nora, 'Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*'; With entries on anything from 'Vichy' to 'Gastronomy', Olick suggests it raises 'the question of what is not a *lieu de mémoire*.' Olick, 'Collective Memory', 336.

[19] Erll, 'Travelling Memory', 7; Hue-Tam Ho Tai, 'Remembered Realms'.

[20] Levy and Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, 3–4.

frameworks in which mnemonic practices are carried out is also the trademark of Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad's *Memory in a Global Age* in which they argue that '[t]oday, memory and the global have to be studied together, as it has become impossible to understand the trajectories of memory outside a global frame of reference.'[21] Increasingly, scholars are turning to such 'travelling' or 'transcultural' memory to examine the movement of memories and mnemonic forms and tropes across borders as well as the dialectic between the local and the global.[22] In this thesis, I read the memory work of end of empire autobiographers in the context of the global phenomenon of decolonisation to study their 'common patterning' while keeping in mind their immediate personal and local specificities.

While it is important to be sensitive to the struggles over memory and the different accounts of the past which are always in play, it is also valid to pay attention to how certain accounts achieve particular prominence and wider popular adherence. It is not that all members of a society subscribe consistently to one account – as we will see, each individual may think of the past differently depending on the context, and naturally, different social groups will emphasise different national memories. However, this sensitivity should not be allowed to overwhelm our attention to the actual shifts in the cultural memories of a society which result from changing parameters of debate. This is the constant movement of the field within which it is possible to contest the past, a discursive delimitation of what it is possible to say as well as of what accounts are likely to gain the authorisation of power holders or opinion makers.

One implication of the relationship between collective self-understanding and shared narratives of the past is that changes in the former can effect changes in the latter and vice versa. So, for instance, changing ideas of what it means to belong to a certain national cohort will alter the way members of that national grouping remember their collective past. It is important that this theory is not reduced to the notion that there is

[21] Assmann and Conrad, *Memory in a Global Age*, 2.
[22] Bond and Rapson, *The Transcultural Turn*; Erll, 'Travelling Memory'; Radstone, 'What Place Is This?'; Tomsky, 'From Sarajevo to 9/11'.

one shared identity with one corresponding view of the past pertaining to all the members of a social group. But it is, nevertheless, possible to trace general developments in what has been called the 'mentality' or 'social imaginary' of a society, and it has been argued that these involve changes to what accounts of the past are sanctioned by the general public. Alon Confino advances the idea of studying memory as a source for understanding historical mentalities which he argues provides 'a useful corrective for the history of memory, a field that is inclined to isolate memories instead of placing them in relation to one another and to society as a whole.'[23] Confino argues that '[t]his approach emphasizes that collective memory is an exploration of a shared identity that unites a social group, be it a family or a nation, whose members nonetheless have different interests and motivations.'[24] Here, I try to take into account both the 'different interests and motivations' of the individual autobiographers as well as the 'shared identity' that provides the social setting for their recollections. Such 'mentalities' come across in the shifting national narratives after empire described in the introduction and provide the occasion for collective as well as individual renegotiation of the past in the light of the present.

When studying end of empire autobiographies, we may examine how the changing and contested narratives of the colonial and post-colonial past which are in circulation in society at the time of writing affect the autobiographical author and how s/he in turn enters into dialogue with those narratives through the construction of a personal narrative. Collective memory depends on individuals to 'actualize' the material of collective memory by carrying out the cognitive processes of remembering, interpreting and renarrating memories.[25] So before we can fully understand the mutually constitutive processes of individual and collective memory work, we must direct our attention to the cognitive processes of the individual.

[23] Confino, 'Memory and the History of Mentalities', 81.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Erll, 'Travelling Memory', 13.

Individual Memory

On the individual level, narrative and cognitive psychologists have demonstrated how people use narratives of past lives to explain who they are now, and how their understanding of their present identity affects the way they remember past attitudes and actions. Psychologist Ulric Neisser has introduced the notion of the 'extended self' to describe the importance for one's 'self-concept' of 'the sense of being in time, of living through time'.[26] The importance for a person's self-understanding of the sense of continuity between past and present has consequences for the way people remember. In order to maintain a positive self-image in the present, people will adjust their recollections of past actions and attitudes.[27]

Frederic Bartlett was one of the first to make experimental forays into memory which took content and context as important factors of remembering and his work has substantially influenced later thinking on memory. Bartlett importantly breaks with a tradition among psychologists of regarding memory as something fixed and lifeless, stored somewhere in the mind to be 're-excited' when need be. Instead, he views memory as a constructive or reconstructive process, determined as much by the present as by the past. For both individuals and groups, he insists, 'the past is being continually re-made, reconstructed in the interests of the present'.[28] Bartlett imagines an organism which attempts to trace back from its present state what must have occurred in the past in order for it to have reached this state.[29] He stresses that this adaptation of memory to the conditions of the present is not something odious but is rather a necessary precondition for efficient navigation of the past.[30] As a consequence, one of the important factors in shaping memory is the attitude of the remembering subject: 'when a subject is being asked to remember, very often the first thing that emerges is something in the nature of attitude. The recall is then a construction, made largely on the basis of this attitude, and its general effect is that of a

[26] Neisser, 'Self-Narratives: True and False', 16.
[27] Engel, *Context Is Everything*, 90–91.
[28] Bartlett, *Remembering*, 309.
[29] Ibid., 202.
[30] Ibid., 204; 213.

justification of the attitude.'[31] This emphasis on attitude, rather than 'fact', as determining for memory is significant for this thesis, as I examine how people's current opinions about the empire or decolonisation affect how they recall their individual past.

Bartlett's findings have been corroborated and developed by psychologists ever since. Michael Ross argues that people take their current beliefs as a starting point for trying to reconstruct what they thought about an issue in the past, using 'implicit theories' about whether or not their opinions have remained stable or changed.[32] Such reconstruction of the past in the light of the present is explained through recourse to the theory of 'cognitive dissonance', developed by Leon Festinger and Elliot Aronson. They suggest that dissonance between different attitudes or between attitudes and actions is unpleasant and that people will try to reduce such 'cognitive dissonance'.[33] One way to minimise dissonance is by making memories of the past cohere with present ideas about what the past ought to have been like.[34] This tendency is related to what another psychologist of memory, Daniel Schacter, calls 'consistency and change biases'. Schacter has identified what he calls the 'Seven Sins of Memory' among which are the various kinds of bias that provide 'distorting influences of our present knowledge, beliefs, and feelings on new experiences or our later memories of them.'[35] Besides consistency and change biases, he mentions egocentric bias, which is the tendency to view oneself as central to past events as well as to trust one's own account of the past over that of others, and hindsight bias, which refers to the teleological filtering of the past through present knowledge.[36]

Baruch Fischhoff has studied the effect of hindsight on people's recollections of the past, including their impression of the foresight they had of the likelihood of an event before it took place. He found a 'creeping

[31] Ibid., 207.
[32] Ross, 'Relation of Implicit Theories to the Construction of Personal Histories', 342.
[33] Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, 3; Aronson and Aronson, *The Social Animal*, 180.
[34] Engel, *Context Is Everything*, 91.
[35] Schacter, *Seven Sins of Memory*, 138.
[36] Ibid., 138–53.

determinism' as people assimilate what they know about an outcome to their recollection of their past estimates of probability. Most often, he argues, people are unaware of the effect of outcome knowledge on their memory of past foresight, and even those who realise the implications of such outcome knowledge will have difficulty in 'reconstructing the foresightful state of mind.'[37] For our purposes, the implication is that even though people may try to remember what the world looked like before decolonisation, they will not be able to reconstruct the condition of ignorance about future events which once governed their attitude to empire and independence.

There is much psychological evidence, then, to suggest that people's current self-perception affects how they remember their past. But it also works the other way around. Memories provide people with a sense of grounding, steadying the flux of experience by ordering it into intelligible narratives. Thus, the role of narrative is crucial to memory and identity. Narrative psychologists argue that people construct narratives out of their lives to create 'temporal coherence' and make change 'make sense'.[38] Dan McAdams argues that '[i]dentity is the story that binds things together in the Me, to the extent that things can be so bound' and suggests that while such life stories are 'based on empirical fact […] they also go beyond fact as imaginative renderings of past, present, and future to make one's life-in-time into a meaningful and followable narrative'.[39] Similarly, Jerome Bruner argues that 'it is through narrative that we create and recreate selfhood' and that the self 'relies on selective remembering to adjust the past to the demands of the present and the anticipated future.'[40] When constructing narratives of identity, people thus draw on their memories in a dialectic process where the narrative that is constructed and the memories that are mobilised shape one another.

[37] Fischhoff, 'Hindsight Not Equal to Foresight', 297–98.
[38] McAdams, 'Personality, Modernity, and the Storied Self', 297.
[39] Ibid., 307–8.
[40] Bruner, 'Self-Making Narratives', 213, 222.

The Social Foundation of Individual Memory

These narratives, in turn, are created in dialogue with one's social and cultural context. As already indicated, the founding figures of modern memory studies, psychologist Frederic Bartlett and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, saw memory as contextual. Bartlett argued that a person's social group affected recall in two ways: 'First, by providing that setting of interest, excitement and emotion which favours the development of specific images, and secondly, by providing a persistent framework of institutions and customs which acts as a schematic basis for constructive memory.'[41] Similarly, Halbwachs proposed that all recollection is social, even when done in private, as it is carried out within social frameworks, and he argued that one's social group defines what can be remembered and how. He reminds us that each person belongs to a number of groups, each of them affecting how the individual remembers and each of them in turn subtly or substantially affected by the contributions of the individual. A person's memories are thus situated at the intersection of a number of groups, each of them adding with various degrees of influence to that person's composite idea of the past.[42]

We can detect two distinct, if overlapping, kinds of social influence on individual memory. One relates to the cultural tools and resources available to the rememberer. Through everything from the language in which people articulate their memories to the narrative templates to which they inadvertently adapt their recollections, individual memory is culturally situated. The other relates to the social context in which recollection takes place. The rememberer manages his/her self-image in relation to a real or imagined audience and positions him/herself socially through the narration of the past. Let us look closer at each of these social foundations of individual memory.

People learn how to construct their life stories from the narratives they are exposed to in conversation and media. Psychologists Dorthe Berntsen and Annette Bohn have documented the use of 'cultural life scripts' which

[41] Bartlett, *Remembering*, 255.
[42] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 52.

govern how people think of their lives according to 'socially sanctioned rules of behaviour'.[43] There are certain tropes which are more 'allowable' than others and people are taught to tell a story which is at once in line with what is culturally acceptable and interesting because of its divergences from the ordinary.[44] As people tell stories that conform in general to what is expected, they justify their inclusion in the social group. Social psychologist Jürgen Straub argues that by ordering 'events into generally intelligible stories', leaving out some details and adding others to fit the templates provided by culture, people attempt to 'endow their experiences with sense and meaning that conforms to socio-cultural standards'.[45] The implication for my study is that the life stories we find in the autobiographies tell us not only about the individual lives lived but also about the conventions of how to tell one's life story which are in operation when the autobiographers narrate their lives. As Straub puts it, '[e]very memory-based representation employs the available cultural means of the specific present time.'[46] We can thus use the autobiographies as a window to understanding the narrative norms of their societies. This will be evident even with autobiographers who try to escape these norms and write their lives differently, as this break can only be effected through a sustained and conscious effort. But it will also become apparent that many writers do not consider the impact of the 'cultural resources, tools, and templates' that they use, which are, according to Straub, 'learned, practiced, and internalized'.[47]

But, as already indicated, individual memory is also social in another way. McAdams argues that life stories are shaped by the context as people 'operate in strategic ways to manage the impressions of others, seeking status

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[43] Berntsen and Bohn, 'Cultural Life Scripts and Individual Life Stories', 64; Interestingly, from a completely different field, philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah uses 'scripts' in a remarkably similar way to describe how collective identities provide 'narratives that people can use in shaping their life plans and in telling their stories.' Appiah, 'Identity, Authenticity, Survival', 160.
[44] Bruner, 'Self-Making and World-Making', 30.
[45] Straub, 'Psychology, Narrative, and Cultural Memory', 222.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid. For memories which are hard to articulate because they do not fit prevalent narratives, see also Stoler and Strassler, 'Castings for the Colonial'; Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure'; Thomson, *Anzac Memories*.

and acceptance in their self-defining groups'.[48] Engel argues that our memories are always recalled in social conversation and that the specific context of recollection such as audience, mood and purpose, affects what memories are called forth and what they are made to signify.[49] Both McAdams and Engel base their claims on sociologist Erving Goffman's argument that people will present 'a particular self that fits the current social situation and elicits satisfying social feedback'.[50] This suggests that the position one has in relation to one's social surroundings at the moment of recall influences what memories one will be likely to reach for and what spin one will put on them. As Engel suggests, the content and expression of personal recollection may differ according to the audience of the situation of recall.[51] As we will see in chapter three, people use their memories of education to manage their self-image and to position themselves in a certain political and social context. Even highly private memories such as those of reading books or writing poetry are shaped by current master narratives about the past in which these memories took place.

In their study of 'self-defining memories', psychologists Avril Thorne and Kate McLean conceptualise 'master narratives' as positions which 'are propounded by people who are granted some modicum of authority' and which are 'enforced in large and small ways'.[52] While this notion of 'master narratives' has connotations of oppressive hegemonic power, the researchers use it in a more innocent sense to refer to their 'function as cultural standards against which community members feel compelled to position their personal experience'. They may, but need not, be oppressive and they can be accepted or rejected by storytellers in acts of individual positioning.[53] McLean et al. argue that 'master narratives are tools for sense making; they help people understand how they are to behave and interpret their experience.'[54] This takes away some of the odious connotations of the term

[48] McAdams, 'Personality, Modernity, and the Storied Self', 307.
[49] Engel, *Context Is Everything*, 87–89.
[50] Ibid., 89. See also Antze and Lambek, 'Forecasting Memory', xvii.
[51] Engel, *Context Is Everything*, 89.
[52] Thorne and McLean, 'Telling Traumatic Events in Adolescence', 171.
[53] Ibid.
[54] McLean, Pasupathi, and Pals, 'Selves Creating Stories Creating Selves', 273.

and illustrates how the narratives of social groups are also used constructively to give sense to individual experience. At the same time, there is no doubt that the field of narrative construction is not a free-for-all game in which everybody has an equal say. Certain narratives about the past are more successful than others, and their success has to do with their explanatory power as well as the kind of backing they receive from power holders and others in a position to shape the public agenda. Master narratives, in other words, are present in all societies, even if some societies leave wider room than others for contestation of what should be the preferred account of the past. The cultural context of any individual sets the limits for how s/he may interpret his/her life story, including what kinds of resistance to dominant narratives are conceivable.

Psychologist Jens Brockmeier suggests that we should view memory as narrative rather than storage. By so doing, it becomes possible to draw out individual as well as social influences on the constitution of memory: 'there is no such thing as an autobiographical process that exists outside the economy of remembering and its cultural traditions. These traditions also include the use of certain narrative repertoires which alone makes the distinction between individual remembering and social context obsolete.'[55] Thus, the narrative framing of memory makes the individual life story inextricable from the cultural context. Brockmeier further argues that 'one of the main functions of the autobiographical process is to allow the individual to inhabit a cultural landscape and, to localize him- or herself within a historical world.'[56] Looking at the published autobiography, this thesis examines a very conscious version of such self-localisation in history and how it responds to a cultural landscape of narratives.

Finally, this leads us to a discussion of the demands made within narrative psychology for a study of the cultural constitution of individual narrative. Psychologist Phillip Hammack argues 'for a particular method for the study of identity that bridges levels of analysis. In fusing the cultural and individual levels of analysis, such an approach to identity fulfills cultural

[55] Brockmeier, *Beyond the Archive*, 230.
[56] Ibid., 233.

psychology's commitment to querying the process of person-culture coconstitution'.[57] McLean et al. suggest that 'master narrative' is a useful term to inform research on the cultural situatedness of individual life stories which may help researchers 'better understand the dynamics between personal stories and the broader cultural narratives under which people learn to construct these stories.'[58] While they quote much evidence to support their claims about the process of self-creation through narrative, they call for more research into the cultural configuration of individual narratives: 'We suggest that one way researchers might continue to explore cultural differences in narrative construction is to examine master narratives and how people use them and respond to them.'[59] As McAdams and McLean argue, 'because narrative identity is exquisitely contextualized in culture, future researchers need to examine the development of life stories in many different societies, nations, and cultural groups.'[60] This is precisely what this study attempts to do, albeit not with a psychological but rather a cultural studies approach, while leaning on insights regarding memory and identity from psychology. By reading together autobiographies from disparate communities whose uniting feature is their past as part of the British Empire, it becomes possible to trace transnational patterns as well as local, culturally specific, inflections in the individual construction of narrative.

The approach I have chosen allows me to study autobiographies as simultaneously responses to and productions of cultural memory. In the first instance, this is cultural memory as circulated in collective narratives of a society's past, more precisely a post-imperial nation's history of colonialism and decolonisation. I study how cultural memory affects individual memory and self-narration as people are forced to reckon with a larger commemorative framework in the narrative construction of a past and present self in the autobiography. In the second instance, I study how these individual responses can in themselves be said to be attempts at affecting the

[57] Hammack, 'Narrative and the Cultural Psychology of Identity', 224.
[58] McLean, Pasupathi, and Pals, 'Selves Creating Stories Creating Selves', 273.
[59] Ibid.
[60] McAdams and McLean, 'Narrative Identity', 237.

cultural memory of their societies as they enter into a dialogue with existing master narratives and adhere to them or try to alter them, using individual memory as (a perhaps more 'authentic' because individual) authorisation of their claims about the past.

Autobiography

This brings us to the identity constructive function of autobiography. While we all tell stories about our selves at all times, the autobiography is probably the most sustained version of such self-narration. Breaking down 'autobiography' to its Greek components, we get *autos* (self), *bios* (life) and *graphē* (writing).[61] Of course, one cannot write one's entire life, so life writing necessarily involves the non-writing of most of one's life. This is both a matter of memory limiting what one can actually remember from one's life, of cultural conventions setting the parameters for how it can be told and of literary demands for an interesting and well-told narrative. Were there no such demands, an enumeration of events without comment or emphasis might serve as autobiography, but such a story would be unwieldy and would flout the demand for readability. After all, autobiography is written with an implicit audience in mind (even if just the author him/herself), and this audience expects some sort of textual purpose. Without a plot structure, a moral or internal momentum, the reader may find the autobiography a waste of time. So autobiography is about creating a narrative out of a life. The raw material for this creation are memories of the life lived, often drawing both on the autobiographer's own memories and those coaxed forth by memory aids such as old letters, diaries and photographs as well as through conversations with friends and family.

In the following, I will consider the autobiographical genre and its relation to the world and I will take into account the discussion of relationality especially prominent in feminist and postcolonial circles before finally discussing how we may use the autobiography as a source for research into historical experience.

[61] Olney, 'Autobiography and the Cultural Moment', 6.

Autobiography as Genre

Given what has already been discussed about the relationship between memory and identity, how may we understand the autobiography as a scene for the construction of identity through memory? Most of the above insights into the importance for individual identity of memory and how one narrates it come from psychological studies of conversational or impromptu life stories. Once applied to autobiographies, it must be kept in mind that the situation of recall differs whether one tells of a life event over a family dinner, to a psychologist or in written form intending a large and unknown audience. These narrative situations not only affect what is likely to be brought to mind, but also how one chooses to structure the narrative. Thus, while psychological studies can usefully inform our understanding of the memory processes behind an autobiography, it would be reductive to posit a simple equation between the autobiography and the often spontaneous recall studied by psychologists. But what autobiography shares with spontaneous recollection is that the present condition of the rememberer shapes recollection so that one's identity and one's memories are intimately connected.

In literary studies, the generic distinctions between autobiography and fiction have been the subject of heated debate. In 1973, one of the founding figures of autobiography studies as it appeared in the 1970s and 1980s, Philippe Lejeune, proposed the following definition of autobiography: '*Retrospective prose narrative written by a real person concerning his own existence, where the focus is his individual life, in particular the story of his personality*.'[62] The problem often raised with this definition is the assumption of intentionality and referentiality. That is, firstly, the notion that the meaning of the text, such as whether the protagonist, narrator and author are identitcal, is determined by the author's intentions and, secondly, that the subject in the text refers to a real person.[63]

[62] Lejeune, 'The Autobiographical Pact', 4, italics in original.
[63] Anderson, *Autobiography*, 2–3; 13.

As regards the former, literary criticism in the twentieth century has seen growing emphasis on the text and the active engagement of its reader in the creation of meaning. This has been accompanied by scepticism towards the idea that the text may provide access to the intentions of the real life author or should be read using knowledge of that person as a key to understanding the text. Thus, New Criticism has warned against the 'Intentional Fallacy' of using the author's life and intentions to interpret literature, and in the late 1960s Roland Barthes proclaimed the 'Death of the Author' to insist upon the importance of the reader in the construction of meaning.[64] Lejeune actually agrees that the text and the reader are primary sites for the construction of meaning. However, he argues that the invitation to read a text autobiographically may be found without resorting to extratextual resources. He suggests that there exists a 'pact' between the author and the reader to interpret the text as autobiographical and that the identity between the name of the author on the title page and the narrator and protagonist between the pages of the book demonstrates the author's intention to enter into such a pact with his/her reader – as he argues, 'exceptions and breaches of trust serve only to emphasize the general credence accorded this type of social contract.'[65] Authors who share the proper name of narrator and protagonist, 'demonstrate their intention to honor his/her *signature*' and take responsibility for the text in a way which invites the reader to become 'a detective, that is to say, to look for breaches of contract'.[66]

While Lejeune's project is to define autobiography and what distinguishes it from other genres such as fiction, Paul de Man challenges this ambition and argues that autobiography cannot easily be separated as a genre since 'the works themselves always seem to shade off into neighboring or even incompatible genres'.[67] His quarrel is in particular with the other aspect of Lejeune's definition, that of referentiality. As a poststructuralist, de Man sees the self of an autobiography as merely a linguistic construction,

[64] Wimsatt and Beardsley, 'The Intentional Fallacy'; Barthes, 'The Death of the Author'.
[65] Lejeune, 'The Autobiographical Pact', 11.
[66] Ibid., 14, italics in original.
[67] de Man, 'Autobiography as De-Facement', 920.

referring to nothing outside the text, and he argues that the autobiographical medium determines the self as much as any real self determines what is written. Whereas Lejeune takes autobiography to refer to a '*real person*' 'whose existence is certified by vital statistics and is verifiable', de Man asks 'is the illusion of reference not a correlation of the structure of the figure', so that it is the autobiographical form which creates the fiction of its own referentiality.[68] Other theorists of autobiography, such as Paul John Eakin, have acknowledged that the autobiographical self is a linguistic construction but insist nevertheless that it is the idea that this construction refers to a real person which distinguishes autobiography from fiction for readers as well as writers of the genre.[69] Narratologist Dorrit Cohn argues that autobiography is defined by 'the reality of its speaking subject', which means that 'it remains no less real when the subject lies or fantasizes about his past than when he utters verifiable truths.'[70] She insists that 'we cannot conceive of any given text as more or less fictional, more or less factual, but that we read it in one key or the other – that fiction, in short, is not a matter of degree but of kind".[71] For Cohn, Lejeune and Eakin, then, the reader's assumptions about the text will determine whether it is read as autobiography or fiction and it is this choice which will decide what standards it is judged against.

Despite poststructuralist deconstructions, we may observe that the continued existence of autobiography is premised on the persistent will to suspend our awareness of such deconstructions. Thus many autobiographies oscillate between on the one hand drawing attention to their own constructedness, to the limitations of authorial memory and warning that what is presented is only the partial truth about the self and then on the other hand writing in such a way as to make reader as well as author forget these qualifications and assume that the text should be taken as a testimony to real events and the real thoughts of a real person. This tension within the

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[68] Lejeune, 'The Autobiographical Pact', 11, italics in original; de Man, 'Autobiography as De-Facement', 920.
[69] Eakin, *Touching the World*, 30.
[70] Cohn, *The Distinction of Fiction*, 31.
[71] Ibid., 35.

autobiography between its existence and its impossibility is one of the driving forces of the genre, and should draw us to study it rather than make us abandon the task of reading it as social or historical experience. As Lejeune puts it: 'In spite of the fact that autobiography is impossible, this in no way prevents it from existing."[72] Eakin interprets this as follows:

> The interest of Lejeune's position resides in his willingness to concede the fictive status of the self and then to proceed with its functioning as experiential fact. While the most extreme deconstructionists would theorize belief in the self out of existence, Lejeune joins Elizabeth Bruss, Georges Gusdorf, Karl J. Weintraub, and others in accepting such belief as a fact of contemporary cultural experience with demonstrable practical consequences for autobiography, which has become one of the most characteristic mediums for its expression.[73]

Thus, Lejeune and Eakin bring us out of the potential poststructuralist deadlock by insisting that it makes sense to study the construction of self in autobiography as referential because its readers and practitioners continue to treat it as such. As Eakin says, it is this 'presumption of truth-value' that 'makes autobiography matter to autobiographers and their readers.'[74]

Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that Lejeune's observation that autobiography can be defined through the identity between author, narrator and protagonist does not imply that the relationship between these three positions becomes irrelevant or simple. The author will construct a narrator who tells us only what s/he wants us to know and who is thus not an exact copy of the author – just like the self one presents in conversation with one's family will be different from the one presented to an employer. The author will use the voice of the narrator to create a protagonist who not only shares the name of the author and narrator but who is also assumed to become these, as the narrated time diminishes the distance between positions of

[72] Lejeune, 'The Autobiographical Pact (Bis)', 131–32.
[73] Eakin, 'Foreword', xiv–xv.
[74] Eakin, *Touching the World*, 30.

speaking. But this protagonist is not just a younger copy of the narrator or of the author. The past self and the attitudes and behaviour embodied in the protagonist are constructions of the present, created through recourse to the author's memories and imagination, shaped by the context of writing, and mediated through the voice of the narrator. Disentangling the relationship between author, narrator and protagonist in an autobiography is in a sense much more difficult than in a novel because we are encouraged to think of all three as referring to the same real life person. The world and the people referred to in an autobiography are intended to refer to real places and people one could meet today or could have met fifty years ago when the author was a child. However, as creations in language, autobiographical narrator and protagonist remain constructions (with longevity that extends beyond the death of the flesh and blood author), albeit constructions we may verify through recourse to archival material.

In my reading, I assume that author, protagonist and narrator are intended to refer to the same person, while I remain attentive to how the protagonist may be represented so as to put the author in a favourable light. Thus, narratological awareness of the gaps between author, narrator and protagonist may be used to explore the relationship between the remembered and the remembering selves and their construction in narrative. It is because of its referential nature that it makes sense to question the validity of the claims made in an autobiography – this is what allows us to analyse differences between the life of the author and the life narrated in terms of 'omissions', 'distortions' or even 'lies', while in fiction we call them imagination. While this insistence on the autobiographical pact may seem slightly naïve, it is necessary for my purposes in order to distinguish between texts that are explicitly 'memory texts' and all other kinds of texts which may draw on memory but do not make claims to their truth value through labels such as 'memoir' or 'autobiography'.

While, like Lejeune, Cohn and Eakin, I read autobiography and fiction as two different practices of which we may ask different questions, it is nevertheless interesting, as these theorists also demonstrate, to study how

autobiographers borrow from fiction. Just like psychologists have noted how life stories are adapted to culturally circulated life scripts, so too, literary critics have found that autobiography adopts its tropes, stylistic choices and structuring devices from other genres.[75] As life is transformed into a narrative with a plot, much literary order is imposed upon it and it is made to obey the rules of other genres, be it the *Bildungsroman*, tragedy or the confession. These choices are not innocent or random, but reveal how the author conceives of and wants to present his/her life. The memories that are shaped into a narrative of a life are made to conform to an overall plot which speaks volumes to the kind of identity the author seeks to convey to the reader. While we cannot assume that the opinions expressed by a fictional character are the same as those of the author, it is meaningful to interpret those expressed by an autobiographical protagonist as at least reflecting what the author would like us to think of his/her past self.

Based on his definition of autobiography, Lejeune excludes memoirs and essayistic autobiographies because he thinks they fail to focus on the story of an individual life or to take the narrative form.[76] However, I include them here because their referentiality and autobiographical intentionality allow me to read them as personal reconstructions of an individual and collective past. Noting that it is often confounded with autobiography, the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* nevertheless ventures that the memoir is distinguished 'by its greater emphasis on other people or upon events such as war and travel experienced in common with others, and sometimes by its more episodic structure, which does not need to be tied to the personal development of the narrator'.[77] The political memoir, then, places greater emphasis than the conventional autobiography on political life with the memoirist having the role of participant in or informed observer of political events. And the family memoir places the relationality discussed below centre stage with the narrator describing family life in general or the memories of a particular relative. This focus on something outside of the

[75] Berntsen and Bohn, 'Cultural Life Scripts and Individual Life Stories'; Egan, *Patterns of Experience in Autobiography*. I discuss the use of tropes below.
[76] Lejeune, 'The Autobiographical Pact', 4.
[77] Baldick, 'Memoir'.

author him/herself may mean that the personal element is obscured entirely so that the narrator acts only as chronicler of events or the narrator may place a former self at the centre of events to be the key protagonist of the political or familial story.

As Julie Rak points out, the memoir is often taken to task for being self-serving and seen as a lesser genre to the autobiography because of its inferior prose and lack of the self-reflectivity that is seen as justifying the autobiography as proper literature.[78] But she notes that with the increased 'interest in the complexity of relations between public and private spheres' in recent years, autobiography studies are beginning to recognise the memoir.[79] Situated on the border between private and public, the memoir is a highly relevant source for a study like this which aims to understand precisely the dynamics between these two realms in autobiographical texts. On the other hand, fiction, poetry, journalism and non-written forms of self-representation as well as other types of life writing like letters and diaries have been excluded from this study, as they do not provide the same kind of sustained narration of a past self with a view to publication or fail to live up to the autobiographical pact.[80]

Relationality

Besides poststructuralist criticism, autobiography studies have been under attack from feminist and postcolonial critics for focusing on 'great white men' and accepting the kind of self-portrayal of such authors which is said to be based on a conception of selfhood as monadic and individualist. Earlier generations of autobiography critics, often seen as incarnated in Georges Gusdorf, have been accused of accepting and promoting the idea of the

[78] Rak, 'Are Memoirs Autobiography?'
[79] Ibid., 322.
[80] Feminist and postcolonial critics of life writing have often challenged the generic boundaries and examined neighbouring genres like novels and poetry, but in this study, I focus on autobiographies and memoirs. See Miller, 'Writing Fictions'; Schenck, 'All of a Piece'; Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Life-Writing*. On the multitude of post-imperial life writing sub-genres, see also Rasch, 'Life Writing After Empire'.

autobiography as a uniquely Western and male genre. Gusdorf suggested that

> [O]ne would say that [autobiography] expresses a concern peculiar to Western man, a concern that has been of good use in his systematic conquest of the universe and that he has communicated to men of other cultures; but those men will thereby have been annexed by a sort of intellectual colonizing to a mentality that was not their own.[81]

This has provoked both feminist and postcolonial critics who have argued that women, non-Western ethnic minorities and colonised peoples do indeed write autobiographies, but do so differently, mirroring a different understanding of selfhood as fragmented, fluid, relational and embodied. Thus, Susan Stanford Friedman charges George Gusdorf and other critics of autobiography with basing their understanding of autobiography on 'a model of separate and unique selfhood'.[82] According to Friedman, this has resulted in the exclusion of women, minorities and non-Western groups from the literary canon because such 'individualistic paradigms of the self ignore the role of collective and relational identities in the individuation process' of these groups.[83]

When the feminist argument has been challenged, it has especially been from people who wish to extend the notion of relational selfhood rather than argue against it. Thus, Eakin warns against essentialising gender differences and proposes that all selfhood 'is relational despite differences that fall out along gender lines.' [84] From postcolonial studies, Bart Moore-Gilbert argues that postcolonial life writing constructs 'an auto/biographical Self which is fundamentally relational', often through recourse to a larger community of tribe, class or nation while Western women's writing often has

[81] Gusdorf, 'Conditions and Limits of Autobiography', 29.
[82] Friedman, 'Women's Autobiographical Selves', 34.
[83] Ibid., 34–35. See also Caine, 'Love and Romance in Interwar British Women's Autobiography', 22; Mason, 'The Other Voice'; Miller, 'Representing Others'.
[84] Eakin, *How Our Lives Become Stories, Making Selves*, 48–50.

a greater emphasis on immediate others.[85] In a study of male leaders' autobiographies of the decolonising era, Philip Holden also insists that male and Western autobiographies are relational, too, and warns against the danger of automatically assuming that texts with relational selves are 'automatically […] in some manner discursively destabilizing.'[86] He draws on Eakin's distinction between two types of relationality: 'first, relation to the social environment, and second, to "proximate" other individuals, frequently members of the protagonist's family.'[87] However, this is a distinction which often breaks down, he argues, so that the texts he studies, 'written in the process of decolonization and anticolonial nationalism, are always already relational in both of Eakin's senses.'[88]

For the purposes of this study, the growing consensus within autobiography studies about the relationality of the self is significant.[89] We have already seen how identity and memory are now understood as constituted in a dialogic process between the individual and the social surroundings. It is a similar recognition which manifests itself when life writing scholars consider how stories of the self are also stories of others. Whether deliberately or inadvertently, the autobiography offers a perspective on the writer's context and how the rememberer responds to that context.

Using Autobiography as a Source

Many autobiographers will preface their story with a comment about the fallibility of their memory. The South African author Alan Paton even footnotes his own memories with comments about how his sister remembers events differently, leaving the reader in doubt as to who to believe and even about who Paton wants us to believe.[90] Yet such destabilising manoeuvres are often countered by assertions such as 'I do remember', this insistence

[85] Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Life-Writing*, 31–32.
[86] Holden, *Autobiography and Decolonization*, 85.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Alexander, 'The Relational Imaginary of M.G. Vassanji's A Place Within'.
[90] Paton, *Towards the Mountain*, 24.

occasionally having the opposite effect of causing the reader to wonder why such assertiveness should be necessary.

The fallibility of memory and the opportunity for manipulation which characterises autobiography might give us pause and they do make some historians suspicious of autobiography as a source for historical knowledge.[91] However, it is my contention here that it is exactly the conscious construction of identity and the past which makes autobiographies relevant to study as expressions of how people will negotiate their own place in society when they have the opportunity to do so quite self-consciously and with elaborate editing before their account is shared with the world.[92] If we give people the chance to construct their past themselves, how do they choose to do so? What do they emphasise and what do they leave out? What kinds of moral tales or stories of development do they choose to make out of the confused fragments offered up to them by memory?

Here, it is instructive to look to oral history where historians have discovered the usefulness of flawed retrospective sources for studies of memory culture. Alistair Thomson describes one of the field's 'paradigm shifts' as oral historians of the late 1970s

> argued that the so-called unreliability of memory was also its strength, and that the subjectivity of memory provided clues not only about the meanings of historical experience, but also about the relationships between past and present, between memory and personal identity, and between individual and collective memory.[93]

Thus, oral history has been working for some time with similar issues to the ones examined in this study. By using memory sources to study memory

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[91] As observed by Barkin, 'Autobiography and History'.

[92] As Luise White observes about the confessions regarding an infamous assassination: 'The very constructed-ness of these confessions [...] makes them accurate constructions that repeat the ideas and viewpoints of the time and place in which they were written, even if those ideas and viewpoints don't add up to a watertight confession.' White, *Assassination of Herbert Chitepo*.

[93] Thomson, 'Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History', 54. See also Frisch, *A Shared Authority*; Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different'; Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure'.

culture rather than to search for facts about the past, these historians show that we can indeed turn artifice to our advantage. Yet even more so than other memory sources, the autobiography is not only unreliable in terms of whether what people remember is accurate, but also in terms of whether they tell the past as they actually remember it. Given the time and effort put into the writing of a book-length memoir or autobiography, this genre puts us at a further remove from immediate recollection. Thus, I will not study these texts to find out what the past was like or even how it is remembered in the present but how the authors want their readers to think they remember the past and how they want their readers to understand that past.

Gillian Whitlock suggests an approach to autobiography which 'gives precedence to reading for the positioning of the subject, and for recognizing the changing social, cultural and political formations which affect the production and reception of autobiographic writing.'[94] This encompasses very succinctly the aim of this thesis, tracing how the autobiographical genre is employed to position the subject and how various contexts influence what can be written. My focus is not so much on the reception of the autobiographies as on what reception the authors appear to aspire to, that is, who they imagine their audience to be and how they want to be perceived by that audience. As to how the production of autobiography is affected by the context, my emphasis is not only on how 'social, cultural and political formations' affect the actual production but also on what we might learn about the relationship between individual and collective memory. I conceive of this as a dialogical process in which the individual must take into account the changing narrative context.[95]

Whitlock argues for the usefulness of a study of imperial autobiographies and concludes with a comment about its political potential: 'To read for processes of multiple identification, for the making and unravelling of identities in autobiographical writing, for what Suleri calls "intimacies", is an important gesture to decolonization.'[96] While I share

[94] Whitlock, *Intimate Empire*, 4.
[95] See also Taylor, 'The Dialogical Self'.
[96] Whitlock, *Intimate Empire*, 5.

Whitlock's view of the capacity of the autobiography to shed light on the historical context and the processes of identity production at work in society and in the text, we differ in our approaches. Contrary to Whitlock's activist stance and to the interventionist tradition of postcolonial theory in general, I do not see it as my task to enact decolonisation. Whereas postcolonial critics take it upon themselves to deconstruct the representational field of colonialism, whether at the outset, during or after the colonial era, my study is at once less interventionist and more anchored in historical experience. I seek to understand how individual self-representation is caught up with the historically specific collective narratives of identity that govern the moment of writing. For all its unfinished business, formal decolonisation provides a defining landmark in collective memory, and through application of analytical tools from memory and autobiography studies, I want to demonstrate how that moment provides a key point of orientation for autobiographers writing after empire.

Max Saunders has thought constructively about how we may use life writing to study cultural memory production. He enters into the discussion about the use of memory sources for historical writing and suggests that

> rather than studying memory-texts for historical fact, in the way nineteenth-century historians sought to establish 'wie es eigentlich gewesen,' our object of study is, instead, modes of writing. Rather than giving us direct access to unmediated memory, what such texts reveal is, instead, memory cultures. When we study life-writing as a source for cultural memory, that is, our conclusions will also be literary-critical ones: interpretations of the ways in which memory was produced, constructed, written, and circulated.[97]

This summarises neatly the insights that a study of autobiography can provide to historical knowledge, using its subjectivity as a strength rather than a weakness. Saunders proceeds to remind us that life writing is not

[97] Saunders, 'Life-Writing, Cultural Memory, and Literary Studies', 322–23.

alone in being skewed. He argues that since all memory is 'always already textualized', the awareness that what we study is not 'unmediated memory' is a salutary one, which should not be regarded as a limitation but rather as making us more attentive to the narrativisation that is always part of remembering, always altering the past event.

In her work on the autobiographies of independence leaders, Elleke Boehmer has developed a framework for understanding this narrativisation through attention to the tropes the authors use. In her case, she traces a number of tropes such as the author's genealogy, stories of incarceration or of journeys and argues that these function relationally to one another. Borrowing from Benedict Anderson's concept of the '*symbolic grammar*' of nationalist imaginings in colonial and post-colonial states, she suggests that we can identify a 'grammar or even *syntax*' of the narratives of post-colonial nationalist leaders. She explains her justification for these linguistic terms: 'First, the tropes operate within the life-stories in an interactive, patterned or even rule-governed way […]. Second, they flexibly replicate *across* autobiographies from different geopolitical contexts, as well as *within* individual texts'.[98] Similarly to Boehmer, I want to study the way the same tropes occur *across* texts from the same or different geopolitical, temporal, racial and ideological positions.

As a literary concept, the trope has come to mean a number of things. Here, I will use it to refer not to a rhetorical device like the metaphor or simile, but to a recurring idea or structuring device. This bears similarities to the motif, but whereas the motif would generally embody a central idea in the work, the tropes that I examine need not hold a central place within the text but may be one among many. While tropes and motifs are often identified as recurring within a work, what I study are some of the recurring structuring devices across works, as shown by Boehmer. And while poets use tropes deliberately, autobiographers may do so inadvertently as they make sense of their lives according to culturally available life scripts. What makes their structuring devices more than mere experience, what makes them

[98] Boehmer, *Stories of Women*, 70–71, italics in original. For the patterning of autobiography, see also Egan, *Patterns of Experience in Autobiography*.

tropes, is how they align with or try to subvert established versions of how a life is understood. In the following chapters, I focus each chapter on a prominent trope, say colonial education or the journey to Britain, but I also consider tropes within tropes such as the alienating curriculum or the gaze of the metropolitan other. These tropes reveal the kinds of 'life scripts' that the authors are applying to their own lives and their recurrence demonstrates that the end of empire autobiography participates in a broader narrative context.

In his examination of life writing and cultural memory, Saunders argues that while we may read autobiography 'naively […] as any other historical document; as written testimony to individual memory', we may also engage in a more sophisticated reading since 'a literary work like *The Prelude*[99] has a different status from the kind of unpublished sources beloved by historians, such as diaries or letters. As it passed into public consciousness, it also contributed to the *production* of cultural memory.'[100] Here, he brings to our attention the dual kind of memory work of literary texts such as autobiographies, on the one hand being instances of cultural memory in themselves, on the other hand affecting cultural memory in a way unpublished texts cannot. This is the reason for my decision to focus on published autobiographies. It allows me to consider both aspects of the cultural memory production at work in autobiographies – not just the way they are affected by changing collective narratives but also how the authors may seek to influence such narratives by entering into a dialogue with them.

This brings us to one of the central questions of this thesis, namely the dialogue between individual and collective narratives. I use 'dialogue' to refer to the interaction between author and society as memoirists respond and write back to existing narratives, elaborate them by aligning their own stories to received versions of the past or counter them by providing an alternative witness account. This is more than a simple matter of collective memory dictating the structure of the author's past. What is particularly

[99] Saunders uses de Man's challenge of the autobiographical genre to argue that in the right mode of reading, all literary production can be interpreted as life writing. This allows him to analyse Wordsworth's poem as an example of autobiographical writing.
[100] Saunders, 'Life-Writing, Cultural Memory, and Literary Studies', 324, italics in original.

significant is the authorial attempt to use the memoir to shape and (re-)direct collective memory of the past. Writers may be unaware of the extent to which their personal narratives are also a product of collective scripts or they may be working deliberately to discredit or support existing accounts of the collective past.

Much research into postcolonial life writing has read autobiography as testimony to the damaging effects of colonialism.[101] There is no doubt that this is an important function and motivation of much life writing after empire. However, such a reading should not be carried out without attention to the exigencies of the moment of writing. This raises questions about how the context of recollection may inspire a certain inflection of the account. Some of these are innocent matters of tellability – the empire only becomes worth explaining once it is gone.[102] Others relate to everything from the fallibility of memory to mere opportunism. As Schacter's notion of 'hindsight bias' will tell us, writing after decolonisation makes it difficult to remember accurately a time when decolonisation was unthought of or an abstract and utopian ideal. As a result, the imperialism that went before will be seen through the lens of its inevitable demise. This includes the autobiographer's own attitude to empire. I am not claiming that all who write end of empire autobiographies are opportunistically writing to satisfy a post-colonial audience – though some may be. Rather, I argue that decolonisation is likely to have rendered important events which, given a different set of outcomes, might have appeared less significant. A child's questioning of a history book, which could otherwise have been passed over as irrelevant or construed as evidence of an anti-authoritarian nature, assumes new significance when read as a personal challenge to the imperial propaganda machine. I hope to show that decolonisation is not simply an interpretative lens that I impose on these texts, but is actually constitutive of the way the authors tell their story and construct their identity.

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[101] Beverley, 'The Margin at the Center'; Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Life-Writing*; Whitlock, *Postcolonial Life Narrative*.
[102] Bruner, 'Self-Making and World-Making', 30.

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'This Union-Jacked Time': Memories of Education as Post-Imperial Positioning

As he sets the scene for a description of his school years, Edward Said opens the third chapter of his memoir with a comment on the Englishness of his education: 'Schoolteachers were supposed to be English, I thought. Students, if they were fortunate, might also be English or, as in my case, if they were not, not.'[1] Here, he reflects upon the role of his English education in Cairo in making him feel, as the title has it, *Out of Place*. It is an axiom of postcolonial studies that education was one means by which the imperial administration sought to cement its position of power in colonies across the world, to the detriment of local peoples' relationship to their own cultures.[2] So much so that several of the most famous postcolonial critics, like Said, have written autobiographically about that moment by way of signalling their own experience with the 'colonisation of the mind'.[3] When these authors recall their education, they reveal not only the colonial past but how they feel about it in the present – and how they want their readers to think they feel about it. Said leaves us in no doubt about the foreignness of his education and his adult scepticism towards it:

> Our lessons and books were mystifyingly English: we read about meadows, castles, and Kings John, Alfred, and Canute with the reverence that our teachers kept reminding us they deserved. Their world made little sense to me, except that I admired their creation of

[1] Said, *Out of Place*, 36.
[2] Mangan, *The Imperial Curriculum*; Tiffin, 'The Institution of Literature'; Viswanathan, 'Currying Favor'.
[3] Bhabha, 'Looking Back, Moving Forward', x; Ngũgĩ, *Decolonising the Mind*, 9–16.

> the language they used, which I, a little Arab boy, was learning something about.[4]

The emphasis on the foreignness of curricula and language reappears in many accounts of colonial education. And the effects that Said describes, the teacher-instilled reverence and admiration as well as the distance between the curriculum and the students' lived experience, are also central features in the representations of education in end of empire autobiographies from across the world.[5] Whether from informal colonies like Said's Egypt, from plantation colonies like Barbados or from settler societies like Australia, autobiographers writing after empire respond to the same global phenomenon of decolonisation, and they seize upon their memories of education as a useful vehicle for positioning themselves in relation to the colonial society that came before the loosening of the imperial ties. As we will see, while using different narrative strategies, autobiographers use the stories of their school years to present their child or adult selves as critics of the imperial system, here represented by their schooling.

I will examine three such autobiographical narratives of education by Barbadian novelist Austin Clarke (1934-) and Australian historians Russel Ward (1914-1995) and Jill Ker Conway (1934-). Clarke and Ward have both made their name as compelling writers who combine a critical stance on Empire with examinations of identity: Clarke's novels and short stories deal with 'cultural exclusion' and 'the twin evils of colonial self-hatred and Caribbean poverty'.[6] And Ward's historical work is focused on the Australian national character, notably his 1958 *The Australian Legend* which outlines a radical, egalitarian and anti-authoritarian 'bush ethos' and creates a dichotomy between the English and the 'real Australian'.[7] More concerned with patriarchy than with imperialism, Ker Conway is famous as a feminist historian who has devoted much attention to how women write

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[4] Said, *Out of Place*, 39.
[5] Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga*; Gladwell, *Brown Face, Big Master*; Horne, *The Education of Young Donald*; James, *Beyond a Boundary*; Mittelhölzer, *A Swarthy Boy*.
[6] Brown and Harris, 'Austin C. Clarke Biography'.
[7] Bridge, 'Anglo-Australian Attitudes'.

their life stories. While Clarke, Ward and Ker Conway come from widely different types of imperial experience, the remarkable similarities in their representations of their school years make for valuable comparison. Clarke's memoir *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack* (1980), Ker Conway's memoir *The Road from Coorain* (1989) and Ward's autobiography *A Radical Life* (1988) were all written after the break-up of the British Empire, and all three authors reflect in copious detail on the colonial nature of their schooling.

Education can be read as an interface between the individual and society. Through participation in rituals of loyalty such as Empire Days, war parades and commemorations, colonial children became quite explicitly part of the imperial project and it was school that was the most prominent organiser of such professions of loyalty.[8] For authors of end of empire autobiographies such as Ker Conway, Clarke and Ward, the world views and power structures which underpinned their education had changed dramatically by the time they came to write their stories. Because of the importance of education to the bygone imperial world order, many autobiographers use their school experience to remark more generally upon the imperial social conditioning of the societies of their past.

In terms of memory, there are good reasons why recollections of education hold a special place in many autobiographies. Schools and universities frame personal and intellectual development in a person's formative years. As theorists of memory have demonstrated, memories from one's formative years are particularly potent – experiences from these years are remembered more clearly than later ones, and people have a tendency to see events that took place in their own formative years as historically more important than earlier and later events. Terming the phenomenon the 'reminiscence bump', psychologists have shown that what happens between the age of 10-25 years is remembered particularly strongly and that events from these years 'are rated as highly likely to be included in one's autobiography'.[9]

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[8] Clarke, *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack*, 15; Gladwell, *Brown Face, Big Master*, 58; Horne, *The Education of Young Donald*, 61–63.
[9] Conway, 'The Inventory of Experience', 32–33; Conway, 'Memory and the Self'.

Providing the institutional frame for many of these formative years, school is likely to be remembered comparatively strongly. Often patterning their life stories on the *Bildungsroman*, autobiographers tend to use their school time memories to illustrate, explain or trace the origins of life-long conflicts or ambitions. Thus, school memories may be employed as a narrative vehicle for discussions of the themes of the autobiography. All the following writers are concerned with the consequences of the empire for their own countries, and they use their recollections of schooling to illustrate on a personal scale these societal issues and their own stance on them.[10]

Descriptions of education are tools for positioning: they allow the autobiographers to signal their concurrence with anti-colonial discourses and to distance themselves from past imperialism, including their own 'complicity' with the snobbery and exclusionary behaviour they now associate with colonial schooling. Rather than examine parades and public rituals, my focus is on the more private performances of the pupils' place in the Empire which are nevertheless remembered as distinctly imperial. As we will see, the authors recall the literary and historical curricula as well as the spoken language of their schools as having been geared towards making school children into imperial subjects. The autobiographers argue that schools promoted Britishness from early on through a sustained programme of readings, rituals and rhetoric. Here, I study how the writers recall their own personal experiences of this and to what purpose they put those memories. I argue that autobiographers use their school memories to position themselves in relation to past and present societal discourses as well as to their past and present selves.

To understand their autobiographical positionings, we need to situate Clarke, Ward and Ker Conway in their contexts, both in terms of their individual careers and the societies in which they have grown up and in terms of how decolonisation has changed the discursive frameworks within which they write. Historian Anne Spry Rush refers to Clarke when she

[10] For a more radical version of this, see also Gikandi's discussion of Ngugi's novel *Weep Not, Child* which adopts the structure of the *Bildungsroman* to recast education as negative. Gikandi, *Ngugi Wa Thiong'o*, 88–89.

claims that Caribbean school children were encouraged to consider themselves 'also as the conquerors, Britons in their own right'. She suggests that this mitigated against a sense of alienation and uses Clarke's memoir to support her case.[11] However, Clarke's irony may have been lost on Rush, for this certainly does not seem to be his message. The Barbados of Clarke's childhood was known as 'Little England', and Clarke repeatedly invokes this phrase to illustrate the parochial atmosphere in which the 'Mother Country' was held up as the ideal for Barbadians to mimic.[12] An émigré to Canada, Clarke's oeuvre deals with the Caribbean diaspora in Canada, but he also returns to Barbadian themes, writing with fondness about vernacular culture and with scathing criticism of colonialism and racism. Thus, the legacy of empire remains an abiding concern for Clarke, a fact which comes out not only in his memoir but in his other writings as well as in interviews. He insists that this legacy is so strong as to make the term 'post-colonial' a misnomer.[13] In addition to situating himself in a post-imperial world as regards how the Caribbean past should be intepreted, Clarke would also have been influenced by his new national context. From the mid-twentieth century onwards, Canada was going through its own end of empire moment with the concommitant reworkings of national narratives and rejections of past imperial identities.[14] In several respects, then, Clarke's work responds to the re-evaluation of the colonial past which was part of decolonisation efforts around the world.

In Ward's earlier work, too, issues of identity and the relationship to Britain have been important. The central project of Ward's classic *The Australian Legend* was to uncover the Australian national character, but this also implied, for him, demonstrating its distinctness from British identity. While historian Carl Bridge points to the British origins of a number of the traits which Ward identified as peculiarly Australian, Ward did not emphasise that likeness but rather portrayed 'all middle and upper-class

[11] Rush, *Bonds of Empire*, 40.
[12] Clarke, *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack*, 41, 52, 71, 183.
[13] Hewson, 'An Interview with Austin Clarke'.
[14] Buckner, *Canada and the End of Empire*; Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution*.

Englishmen [as] incompetents'.[15] The Australia in which Ward grew up prided itself on its Britishness; something Ward also observes in his later autobiography. This leads historian John Hirst to suggest that Ward was arguing 'against his experience' when he insisted that the distinctly Australian bush ethos had always had a strong hold on even respectable Australians.[16] Ward was thus one of the Australian radical nationalist historians which Meaney criticises for their idea that Australian Britishness was the result of 'cultural manipulation'.[17] Hirst argues that, rather than the culmination of a long tradition, the emerging popularity in the 1950s of Australian folklore as well as of Ward's own work was the result of a change in national sentiment: 'the respectable, or more precisely, their children were becoming less British and more Australian in outlook'.[18] This development, described in the introduction, had asserted itself even more fully 30 years later when Ward was writing his autobiography. Indeed, by that time Australians had almost entirely ceased to self-identify as British.

Ker Conway, like Clarke, wrote her memoir in America – having lived for years in Canada, she became the first female president of Smith College and then wrote her memoir while settled in the US as a visiting professor at MIT. An Australian historian like Ward, her work also had a leftist bent and sprang from an interest in Australian rural history, but focused more on women's issues. In the 1990s, after having written several memoirs, she turned her scholarly attention to that genre, exploring in particular women's identity formation in autobiographical writing and comparing the storylines available to women with the heroic narratives of male imperial adventures.[19] Critics of Ker Conway's canonical memoir have, with good reason, focused on her representation of gender. Thus, Rocío G. Davis argues that Ker Conway's attachment to Australia as place is finally overruled by its 'lack of space for intellectual women' and her

[15] Bridge, 'Anglo-Australian Attitudes', 195–99.
[16] Hirst, *Looking for Australia*, 90.
[17] Meaney, 'Britishness and Australian Identity', 84. See also chapter one.
[18] Hirst, *Looking for Australia*, 91.
[19] Ker Conway, *When Memory Speaks*.

mother's oppressiveness which caused her to leave.[20] Yet in focusing on the gender politics of the narrative, however important, these critics overlook the challenges to imperial culture that Ker Conway conveys through her memories of education. Indeed, Ker Conway harnesses some of her critique of Australian patriarchy to an attack on imperial culture. The Department of External Affairs where she failed to get a job because of her sex was, she says, haunted by a 'colonial mentality'.[21] And she argues that her 'male peers at the University of Sydney strove for a Rhodes scholarship, not so they could come back to tackle Australia's problems, but to settle down happily to the life of an Oxford or Cambridge don, and forget about Australian culture as soon as possible.'[22] For Ker Conway, then, part of Australia's suffocating climate for women was a legacy of its imperial connection.

Writing in the 1980s, Clarke, Ward and Ker Conway thus had decades of anti-authoritarian, at times empire-critical, work behind them. In addition, in the countries where they had gone to school in the 1920-1940s, the British Empire had now come to be viewed in a dimmer light. As we saw in the introduction, the decolonising process looked quite different in Australia and Barbados, but in both places the idea of belonging to an imperial family came under increasing pressure, and by the 1960s it was replaced by strengthened nationalisms which sought to define a distinct national identity. In the cultural sphere, historians and artists were providing ways of understanding the local which did not depend on the relationship to Britain.[23] By the 1980s, imperialism had been firmly relegated to the past, and postcolonial critics across the globe, like Said, were beginning to expose the cultural implications of Empire. In their autobiographical texts, these personal and societal agendas combine to make Ward, Ker Conway and

[20] Davis, 'Academic Autobiography as Women's History', 111; See also Wells, 'Australian Women's Autobiographies as Discourses of National Identity'; and McCooey, *Artful Histories*, 75–77.
[21] Ker Conway, *The Road from Coorain*, 193.
[22] Ibid., 182.
[23] Chamberlain, *Empire and Nation-Building in the Caribbean*; Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*; Hall, 'Negotiating Caribbean Identities'; Higman, *A Concise History of the Caribbean*.

Clarke's representations of their school years vehicles for a grander interrogation of imperialism and its ramifications.

I want to suggest that these depictions of colonial education are used by the authors to position themselves in relation to discourses on imperialism, past and present. In psychology, the idea of 'narrative positioning' has been developed to account for the way in which 'in conversation […] people position themselves in relation to one another'.[24] One of the proponents of positioning analysis, Michael Bamberg, suggests that we should study the phenomenon on three levels: '*How are characters positioned in relation to one another within the reported events?*', '*How does the speaker position him- or herself to the audience?*' and '*How do narrators position themselves to themselves?*'[25] While the framework has been developed to study identity construction in spoken conversation, I believe it can be usefully applied to autobiographical texts as well. As discussed in chapter two, life writing is now being studied for the way the self and the past are constituted through discourse. Fundamental to this is the way in which individuals position themselves in relation to others, in relation to an imagined audience and in relation their own past and present selves. Intrinsic to all these questions is the relation to societal discourses past and present. Narrators may signal, through strategies of distancing or rapprochement, that they buy into certain discourses and not others and that they feel in a particular way about past discourses and about their former attitude to those discourses. The positioning that takes place is thus multidirectional in terms of its temporal and social parameters.

Specifically, as we will see in the three autobiographies studied here, authors may fashion a younger self who was critical of or compliant with imperial discourses and they may use either trope as a means of critiquing the past while aligning their narrating self with a contemporary, anti-colonial discourse. The texts act as a window on the authors' moment of writing after empire as they reveal how people position themselves to show

[24] Bamberg, 'Positioning Between Structure and Performance', 336, italics in original.
[25] Ibid., 337.

that they no longer align themselves ideologically with the aesthetics of colonialism.

In the following, I want to consider firstly some of the recurring tropes and techniques which the authors use to illustrate the damaging effects of their colonial education, before I move on to discuss how they refer to their own role as critical or compliant school children. One trope which reappears in many end of empire autobiographies is a sense of alienation brought about by a foreign curriculum and speech. This is related to another trope, namely that colonial education was premised on a sense of British superiority and that the private schools they attended invited elitism and snobbery, adding to their alienation from their own environment. Here, I will look first at how imperial curricula are linked to alienation before turning to the retrospective association of the English accent with snobbery. As they couch their school memories in these terms, the authors more or less explicitly communicate their adult criticism of colonial education and by extension of imperialism.

'We Might Have Been in Sussex': Alienating Curricula

Historians and literary scholars writing around the same time as Ker Conway, Ward and Clarke pointed to the use of metropolitan defined curricula to instil certain values in colonial children in order to enforce a subtle but pervasive control.[26] These and later critics have linked this to a sense of alienation from local surroundings. Literary scholar Ian Smith describes the discrepancy between the world of colonial children and the literature they were made to read in school. These 'decontextualized signs', as he terms them, 'cut off from observable reality' have profound emotional effects as they 'foster a pernicious aestheticism that not only favors cultural selfdevaluation but promotes a looking away from one's own history'.[27] As we will see in the autobiographies, the authors are keen to emphasise precisely the distance between the curriculum and their lived experience and

[26] Mangan, *The Imperial Curriculum*; Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy*; Ngũgĩ, *Decolonising the Mind*; Tiffin, 'Cold Hearts and (Foreign) Tongues'; Viswanathan, 'Currying Favor'.
[27] Smith, 'Misusing Canonical Intertexts', 816.

the lamentable consequences of that distance. This includes attempts to imitate the metropolitan ideal and a neglect of one's own history and culture. Whether by stressing their childhood questioning of the imperial curriculum or by implying their later rejection of it, the authors are generally concerned to voice their criticism of the teaching and its consequences, thus using descriptions of imperial curricula to distance themselves from imperialism more broadly.

Clarke describes a school curriculum which did not invite the students to connect their school learning with their real life experience. Echoing Said, Clarke comments how 'I was under a chloroform of learning things which made no immediate sense'.[28] Helen Tiffin has termed this 'the daffodil gap', a syndrome referring to the oft-invoked daffodils of Wordsworth's poem 'I wandered lonely as a cloud' which were wholly unfamiliar to many colonial children. Tiffin calls rote learning 'an effective mode of moral, spiritual and political inculcation' in which children, by learning to recite poems by heart, 'absorbed into their bodies (*"hearts"*) the "tongue" of the coloniser' in 'a ritual act of obedience'.[29] Similarly, Clarke suggests that the syllabus entered his body. Associated with anaesthetic, the chloroform learning can be seen to have rendered Clarke's body and mind vulnerable and passive to other people's impositions. While the texts 'made no immediate sense', he represents his childhood self as though in a daze of school learning.

When Clarke, too, mentions daffodils (although referring not to Wordsworth but to a poem by Robert Herrick), we see how his childhood self was not easily shaken from school teachings. Clarke reports a conversation between himself and a pupil of his former school, St Matthias, which illustrates different kinds of imperial education. At St Matthias, the public school, there were overt rites of loyalty where they sang *God Save the King* and paid respect to British war dead; at the private school Combermere (or 'Cawmere' as his childhood self calls it), the loyalty was of the more subtle kind which Tiffin describes:

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[28] Clarke, *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack*, 48.
[29] Tiffin, 'Cold Hearts and (Foreign) Tongues', 913, italics in original.

'All we got to do at Cawmere is learn a few lines of Latin from Vergil, recite a poem like *Fair Daffodil we hate to see thee haste away so soon…*'

'What's a daffodil, though? They have daffodils at Cawmere?

'A daffodil? A daffodil is only the name of a flower, man!'

'But we got flowers growing all over the place, wild flowers and good flowers. In the school garden and *out the front road*. And why we never call them a daffodil?'

'A daffodil is a English flower!'

'We is English too, man.'

'One of these days I am going up in the Mother Country to further my studies.'[30]

While the conversation seems a little too neat in its exposition of the problem of 'the daffodil gap' to be convincing as simply a memory, there is no doubt that it is precisely a critique similar to Tiffin's that Clarke wants to articulate in memory form. While his friend challenges what constitutes Englishness, the young Clarke remains defensive of the connection to 'the Mother Country'. The very adult phrase, 'further my studies' in a child's mouth suggests the internalisation of the language of an English school system, providing the vocabulary through which the children can conceive of their own future despite its inability to account for their present, like the flowers they have 'all over the place'.

Just as literary models were drawn from England, so, Clarke says, his history teaching caused him to live mentally in an England of his dreams. He presents a childhood self who began to see the world through the stories he learned at school and who fitted the Barbadian reality around him into this framework. He lists people and events in English history, saying how he learned 'about Kings who lost their heads; about Kings who kept their heads; and about Kings whose wives lost theirs'. The summary of English history through an inordinate amount of beheadings illustrates the brutality

[30] Clarke, *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack*, 56, italics in original.

of the English past, ironically undercutting the image of England as the source and pinnacle of civilisation. In contrast, 'nothing was taught about Barbados'. The effect, he argues, was to alienate him from that island. Thus, he would walk 'past the church which resembled castles in the *History of England* book, and sit at the table with my mother, under the weak kerosene lamp, and hope to live in a castle some day'. There is a stark contrast between his mother's humble house and his hopes which go beyond a good job in Barbados to becoming part of the castle-dwelling English aristocracy of his history books. 'I was', he says, 'more at ease in England, the Mother Country, than in Barbados.' The history books and the world around him became confused as he fell in love with the English queens. In order to relate to the women of the books, 'I painted their faces black', but conversely, Barbadian girls were also mentally adapted to his new ideal, the English queens, as he 'put their huge crinolined dresses on the girls I saw around me'.[31] Looking back, Clarke uses these stories of his absorption in another world to show how pervasively his everyday life in Barbados was affected by the metropolitan models taught in school. His daydreaming, he says, was pieced together by 'English history and culture and English civilization which were my daily intellectual fare at Combermere – all this stuck in my mind and I lived in this Union-Jacked time as if I were in an English countryside'.[32] He represents his life and time as metaphorically enveloped in the flag of the ruler, so that he was unable to see the world around him as other than a scene on which to re-enact English history, as when he played out the Battle of Hastings on the Barbadian Hastings Rocks.[33]

The upshot of the metropolitan curriculum, Clarke demonstrates, was both disappointment that his own reality failed to live up to the ideals set by metropolitan texts and that he began to see Barbados in a way which emphasised similarities to the natural imagery of British literature and ignored anything which did not fit that mould. His childhood daydreaming of England, he says, influenced even the way he was able to express himself

[31] Ibid., 72–73.
[32] Ibid., 137.
[33] Ibid., 77.

artistically: 'my dreams found me writing poetry. They were copies of English poetry. What other poetry would I know? Milton and Keats'.[34] He suggests that the literary fare of his education not only made him idealise British culture but also affected the very tools with which he was able to understand and express his own experience. He had, in Tiffin's words, 'absorbed' the text. As Tiffin notes elsewhere, imperial educational principles 'affected not just the place of literature within the West Indian curriculum but also the specific literary models available to West Indians'.[35] But when Clarke wrote his memoir, he had certainly stopped imitating Milton and Keats and written himself into the emerging tradition of Caribbean writers who blend English and Creole modes of expression. This creates a marked difference between the narrating self and the protagonist, the former trapped in the Anglophile world created by his education, the latter able to expose the ideology behind his education.

As we move on to Ker Conway, keep in mind the issues we saw in Clarke's memoir in terms of the setting aside of local circumstances because of a curricular focus on metropolitan culture. The way the following passage mirrors Clarke's comments in a distinctly Australian setting makes it worth quoting at length:

> We might have been in Sussex for all the attention we paid to Australian poetry and prose. It did not count. We, for our part, dutifully learned Shakespeare's imagery drawn from the English landscape and from English horticulture. We memorized Keats's "Ode to Autumn" or Shelley on the skylark without ever having seen the progression of the seasons and the natural world they referred to. This gave us the impression that great poetry and fiction were written by and about people and places far distant from Australia. Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* or the Oxford collection of romantic poetry we read were so beautiful it didn't seem to matter, though to us poetry was more like incantation than related to the rhythms of our own speech.

[34] Ibid., 137.
[35] Tiffin, 'The Institution of Literature', 44.

> As for landscape, we learned by implication that ours was ugly, because it deviated totally from the landscape of the Cotswolds and the Lake Country, or the romantic hills and valleys of Constable.[36]

Like Clarke, it is clear that Ker Conway is critical of the omission of Australian literature and the consequences this had for the way she and her peers viewed their own country. While Clarke says he began to view Barbados as England, Ker Conway says she learned that the Australian landscape was ugly because it was so unlike that of the British poems. While writing about a context with a very different relationship to the empire, Ker Conway depicts her experience in language very similar to Clarke's. In both cases, the image is of a schoolchild alienated from his/her own country because the curriculum provided no literary models for the celebration of their native landscape. The comparison of poetry with incantation and the suggestion that it was not related to the speech of the schoolchildren is another instance of the performance of the imperial canon. Both authors echo Tiffin's argument about the 'internalisation of the European text'.[37] While the unequal power relations of the West Indian context that Tiffin and Clarke describe make the coloniser-colonised dichotomy much starker there, it is evident that Ker Conway interprets her own childhood experience as one of her native culture being set aside for the benefit of an absent British one which corresponded neither to the landscape nor to the speech she was familiar with. All the more so when we are told that as an adolescent at university, she came to take a very critical stance on Britain's role in Australia which she says she began to view very much in terms of an imperial imposition of metropolitan standards.[38]

Ker Conway notes the 'revelation' she experienced when reading T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Whereas Clarke says he was deprived as a child of literary models that fitted his own experience to the extent that he began adapting his experience to the English model offered, Ker Conway describes

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[36] Ker Conway, *The Road from Coorain*, 98–99.
[37] Tiffin, 'Cold Hearts and (Foreign) Tongues', 912.
[38] Ker Conway, *The Road from Coorain*, 182.

encountering literature which actually did speak meaningfully to the world around her:

> Here was what I took to be an English poet whose attitude to nature was not romantic, who mentioned deserts and whitening bones. It was great poetry about a landscape I *knew*. No one told me Eliot was an American poet or that his imagination was rooted in a midwestern American landscape. I just knew that it resonated for me in ways English romantic poetry never could. I began to think that when I got to the University of Sydney, I would study English literature.[39]

Writing also for an American audience, Ker Conway seems to find it necessary to assure her readers that she now appreciates their claim on the great poet. As she stresses the American roots of the poetry which 'resonated' for her, she foreshadows her emotional and artistic affinity with the landscape of the US where she lives at the time of writing. It is upon the encounter with Eliot's poetry that she says she began to envision a university study of English literature, linking that decision with poetry which occupies a double position in that it was thought at the time to be English but recognised retrospectively as American. In her narrative, Eliot's American origins were kept from her, almost as a dirty secret, as though her teachers wanted to appropriate one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century for the English canon. Her university encounter with Australian poetry also emphasises her uncovering of a cultural background that had hitherto been denied her: 'I bought Australian verse and read the literary heritage that up to now had been obscured by an exclusive focus on English poetry. It was hard to contain my excitement.'[40]

This idea of having been kept in the dark is one which we find in a number of end of empire autobiographies.[41] To return to Clarke, he argues

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[39] Ibid., 141, italics in original.
[40] Ibid., 184.
[41] In Jamaica, Joyce Gladwell says they only 'heard snippets from our own history', while 'the focus of our loyalty was Britain, culminating yearly on Empire Day, when we stood round the Union Jack and sang "Land of Hope and Glory"', and Australian Donald Horne

that his history teaching did not only promote English history as the proper subject for him to learn, it also downplayed or even denied important aspects of his own history. Thus, he describes how his education would insist that slavery belonged to the American, not the English and Barbadian past:

> No history book at St. Matthias or at Combermere dealt with this shameful Amurcan invention. It was the Amurcan blacks who were slaves, not the English blacks! England would never allow any of her subjects to be held slaves. It was therefore far, far, far, far back in a past, which we had brushed clean, that there were slaves to be found, not related to us.[42]

This bears striking resemblance to a passage from George Lamming's classic autobiographical novel from 1953, *In the Castle of My Skin*, where a school teacher insisted that slavery 'was a long, long, long time ago. […] And moreover it had nothing to do with people in Barbados. No one there was ever a slave, the teacher said. It was in another part of the world that those things happened. Not in Little England.' [43] In mirroring Lamming's canonical work, Clarke adopts an established template for the telling of his own story. It is one which offers a stinging critique of colonial education as promoting 'unspeakability' or 'radical amnesia' surrounding 'slavery, the primal event of Caribbean identity.'[44] Clarke suggests that slavery was even, perversely, used to bolster the reputation of England as it was recollected only as a 'shameful Amurcan invention', unimaginable within the Empire. Simon Gikandi notes that in Lamming's text, through the combined focus on William the Conqueror and denial of slavery, 'colonial discourse has turned the foundational myth of Englishness into a palpable reality and, in

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describes how '[w]e knew more about the Roman settlement of Britain than about the settlement of Muswellbrook', his childhood town. Gladwell, *Brown Face, Big Master*, 58; Horne, *The Education of Young Donald*, 29.

[42] Clarke, *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack*, 154.

[43] Lamming, *In the Castle of My Skin*, 57.

[44] Schwarz, *The White Man's World*, 200; Gikandi, 'Back to the Future: Lamming and Decolonization', 185.

the process, elided local histories of slavery and enslavement.'[45] As Clarke emulates Lamming's exposition, even down to the repetition of 'a long, long, long time ago' which in his text becomes 'far, far, far, far back in a past', he contributes to consolidating the narrative of a colonial education that resigned slavery to a distant time and place and focused on a positive, imperial history instead.

The trope of the omission of local history because of a focus on imperial or English history also appears in Ward's *A Radical Life*. He, too, reports his younger self as having accepted and internalised the imperial version of events. It is a recurring theme in Ward's autobiography that the history curriculum he met during his schooling focused on British history, to the complete exclusion of the Australian past. He recounts how he became sick as a teacher was dissecting a frog:

> Everyone laughed heartily when, quite unexpectedly, I vomited all over the history textbook open before me – a British history book, naturally. Nothing else was taught in most Australian schools fifty or sixty years ago. At Wesley we had a six-part history of Britain from the Roman conquest till World War I, one volume for each of the six years of the English secondary school course. I loved them all, though I do remember asking why we didn't learn any Australian history. The simple answer was that, because British people had arrived in Australia such a short time ago, there was no Australian history. The reply satisfied me then and for long afterwards.[46]

Why Ward would have had his history book open during a Science lesson is not addressed, but his bodily response to the dissection of the frog serves perhaps to illustrate his adult revulsion at an approach to history which he now condemns.[47] Ward's childhood self is torn between a love for his history

[45] Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness*, 26.
[46] Ward, *A Radical Life*, 31.
[47] In a similar fashion, Ker Conway uses her almost irrepressible youthful laughter to communicate her emotional dissociation from Australian snobbery towards Britain at least three times. Thus, she says that her class was 'reduced to gales of laughter' by the 'flat-

books and a child's naïve questioning of the status quo, the authenticity of the memory of this critical stance insisted upon in the phrase 'I do remember'. The answer he received, that the British peopling of Australia had happened so recently that there was no history yet, comes from the anonymous reported voice of not one teacher but the educational establishment in general. The passage suggests the absurdity of claiming that Australia should not have a history. It is difficult to tell whether Ward here is also critical of the fact that history is equated with British settlement, ignoring millennia of Aboriginal history, or if his purpose is to stress that white Australians did have a history of their own by the 1920s. The idea of Australia's history stemming from and overlapping with the time since Anglo-Celtic settlement permeates his own rendition of the past in *The Australian Legend* where 'The Founding Fathers' refer to convicts and 'early demographic changes' to the influx of convicts and free settlers, ignoring the indigenous founders of the country and their place in its demography.[48] However, writing his autobiography at a time when the 1988 Bicentennial and new histories of frontier violence were bringing Aboriginal rights to the fore, Ward is (perhaps deliberately) vague about what kind of 'Australian history' he was requesting as a child. His autobiography contains a couple of nods to this emerging critique of settler violations against the country's original inhabitants, but overall, he does not link this oppression to imperialism which is instead associated with the kind of loyalty he was asked to perform in school.[49]

His questioning of the curriculum makes his childhood self appear sceptical, a case of what Leigh Dale describes as 'disruptive' moments when a student 'asks the "wrong" question', 'intrinsically unsettling' because 'drawing attention to the making of authority'.[50] Yet despite this briefly unsettling moment, Ward says he was satisfied by the answer given by the teacher. This illustrates the difference between Ward's youthful acceptance

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footed statements' of their Australian history textbook. Ker Conway, *The Road from Coorain*, 102, 138, 190.

[48] Ward, *The Australian Legend*, 15–16.

[49] Ward, *A Radical Life*, 27, 52, 114–20.

[50] Dale, *The Enchantment of English*, 20.

of the imperial interpretation of history which was presented to him and his adult independent and untiring 'radical' pursuit of another version of history, thus pointing ahead to a time when he has ceased to be satisfied with the teacher's answer. As we will see below, it is characteristic of Ward's autobiography that he makes this double move in which he positions himself at once as both critical and compliant.

'We Spoke Like Little Black Englishmen': Speech and Snobbery

It is not only the curriculum but also the language taught in schools which is recalled as having set apart the students from their local culture. Language use is a social marker which makes the speaker identifiable to others as belonging to a certain group.[51] When Ward, Ker Conway and Clarke recall their school years, they remember teachers for their way of speaking, recall lessons in correct spelling and pronunciation and how speech was defining for their identities and group affiliations. Thus, memories about speech are at once deeply personal and inextricable from their social context.

The fact that educational standards in colonial schools derived ultimately from the metropole meant that the sanctioned language use was that approved by educators in Britain. Thus, the weeding out of what was considered to be 'crude' or 'vulgar' language can be read as an attack on local culture.[52] According to Norrel London, scholar of education policy, English teaching in the West Indies was an attempt to eradicate vernaculars and to establish the imperial metropolitan form as the only correct mode of communication.[53] Historian Joy Damousi describes how speech was seen in Australia as 'reflective of character and culture'.[54] Elocution instructions 'encouraged a generic sound that had an *Englishness* in character and tone. In the effort to improve Australian speech and pronunciation, it was the middle to upper-class English accent, the voice of empire, that was, in some

[51] Eckert, *Linguistic Variation as Social Practice*.
[52] Ashcroft, *Caliban's Voice*, 1, 46.
[53] London, 'Ideology and Politics in English-Language Education in Trinidad and Tobago', 55.
[54] Damousi, *Colonial Voices*, 9–10.

quarters, still favoured over all other sounds'.[55] When anti-colonial nationalists and artists in both Australia and the Caribbean wanted to assert the worth and distinctness of their cultures, one area of attention was the rehabilitation of local dialects, or what the Barbadian poet Edward Kamau Brathwaite termed the 'nation language'.[56] In spite of the different linguistic situations in Australia and Barbados, including the influence of African languages on Caribbean Creole, Ward, Ker Conway and Clarke describe their experiences of adopting the Received Pronunciation of Britain in remarkably similar terms.

All three authors employ memories of speech and language instruction to illustrate precisely the tension between imperial and national identities and to position the individual protagonist and narrator within that debate. Their memories of taking up Standard English are tinged with guilt at what is seen retrospectively as their betrayal of vernacular culture. Because Standard English did not arise effortlessly from their local surroundings, but had to be consciously adopted or even imposed upon the children, the language of school is portrayed as unnatural and as creating a division between the protagonists and their societies. The autobiographers often mock the snobbery towards foreign standards of their former selves, but ultimately the image is of the innocence and impotence of children in the face of colonial power embodied in a figure of authority – the teacher.

Ward directly links the speech of his former self and his teachers to the imperial mind-set of his education. When introducing his time at university, he cites a poem about the varsity and notes that 'it was very important to pronounce the words in the clipped, affected Oxbridge way so that the final "ty" came out, not as in "teee" as in Australia but as a very short "teh" as in England: and of course to make the end words rhyme by saying "scahsity" for "scaircity".'[57] In referring to the affectation of un-Australian pronunciation, Ward creates an image of young students quite out of touch with the country around them:

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[55] Ibid., 166, italics in original.
[56] Brathwaite, *History of the Voice*, 13.
[57] Ward, *A Radical Life*, 65.

> Thus we emphasised that we studied, not at a university like other Australians, but at a very superior and exclusive facsimile of the very grandest institution on this planet, 'The Varsity' – of Oxford or Cambridge. In short, we loved England and ruling British institutions very much and those of our own country not at all except in so far as the latter were faithful replicas of the former. Nowhere, we passionately believed, not even in New Zealand, could there be a better, because more loyally British, varsity than ours.[58]

In retrospect, Ward is quite explicit that something was lost in this admiration for Britain, namely love for one's own country, valued only insofar as it resembled Britain. This accusation of the derivativeness and cultural cringing instilled by the educational culture of Australia pervades his autobiography. In *A Radical Life*, Ward uses his own experiences to illustrate what Australia was like before radicals like him brought to the attention of his fellow nationals their own culture rather than the one derived from Britain. But in this passage, Ward aligns his past self with the imperial sentiments of Australian society in his youth.

What is evident in Ward's account is not only the sense of being set apart from the rest of Australian society but of being superior to it. Ward consistently associates his education with snobbery, as he suggests that he was encouraged to think more highly of himself than of his fellow countrymen. He describes his school as a 'great pillar of snobbery and imperialist loyalty' and says of himself that he 'took readily enough to elitist snobbery'.[59] Thus, in the texts of Ward and the others, the imperial connection becomes the target of what is actually a class analysis as their snobbery towards Britain is interpreted as a rejection of vernacular, working class culture. 'We were an elite', says Ker Conway, when she refers to the attitude she was taught at her Australian boarding school. Hence, they must remember that '[t]he best standards were derived from Great Britain, and

[58] Ibid.
[59] Ibid., 50, 60.

should be emulated unquestioningly.'[60] In Barbados, Clarke learned that attending the school he did 'meant we were to be the new leaders of the country, and members of the Barbados middle class.'[61]

This trope of colonial education as fostering elitism and snobbery recurs in many accounts of schooling in end of empire autobiographies.[62] Australian Donald Horne distinguishes between 'the boys who went on using *ain't*' and 'those of us who said *aren't*'.[63] Manning Clark uses his education as a contrast against which to stress the egalitarian nature of Australian society: 'It was an education for an élite. It was an education designed for a governing class in that country which ruled over a large portion of the world, the Empire on which the sun never set – but Australia had neither a governing class nor an Empire.'[64] In Joyce Gladwell's Jamaican childhood home, to speak dialect was 'to speak "badly"'[65] and at boarding school she '[s]crupulously set to work to suppress the familiar phrases and pronunciation and to replace them with the new.'[66] She says she 'accepted' this despite the pain she experienced as her new language cut her off from her home community.[67] Kathleen Fitzpatrick identifies the same class division but locates herself more firmly on the side of those rejecting imperial indoctrination. She describes her childhood self as reacting 'with Aussie irreverence' and contrasts the accents of the children at her sister's school with her own: 'They all spoke lah-di-dah, instead of the good broad Australian accent I had acquired at the Presentation, and they were forever dropping idiotic curtsys, as if they had been living at Versailles before the French Revolution instead of in Burke Road, Melbourne, in the twentieth century.'[68] In all of these texts, the emulation of British speech and mores is cast as phony, elitist and foreign and contrasted with the

[60] Ker Conway, *The Road from Coorain*, 102.
[61] Clarke, *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack*, 8. See also Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga*, 39.
[62] Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga*; Gladwell, *Brown Face, Big Master*; Horne, *The Education of Young Donald*; Said, *Out of Place*.
[63] Horne, *The Education of Young Donald*, 74, italics in original.
[64] Clark, *The Puzzles of Childhood*, 188.
[65] Gladwell, *Brown Face, Big Master*, 70.
[66] Ibid., 79.
[67] Ibid., 78–79.
[68] Fitzpatrick, *Solid Bluestone Foundations*, 134.

authenticity of local speech which is equated with the working class and a loyalty to one's national belonging.

In *The Road from Coorain*, Ker Conway describes the vigorous patrolling of language in schools. But she uses laughter to distance her youthful self from the classroom instruction:

> One's voice must be well modulated and purged of all ubiquitous Australian diphthongs. Teachers were tireless in pointing them out and stopping the class until the offender got the word right. Drills of 'how now brown cow' might have us all scarlet in the face with choked schoolgirl laughter, but they were serious matters for our instructors, ever on guard against the diphthongs that heralded cultural decline.[69]

There is a stark contrast between the giggles at the silly sentences and the teachers who are shown to have read too much into language use, suggested by the religious and military language of purging, offending, drilling and being on guard. The idea that Australian diphthongs should equal cultural decline is shown simultaneously as taking language too seriously and as rejecting the vernacular of their own society.

But while Ker Conway uses her laughter to indicate that she did not simply accept this language programme as a schoolgirl, she refers elsewhere to the language of her home being precisely rid of vernacular expressions. Before going to the boarding school, she spent one day in an ordinary public school, in what she terms, 'a classic confrontation for the Australian of my generation' between herself, 'the carefully respectable copier of British manners' and the other children, representing 'the more vital and unquestionably more authentic Australian popular culture.' In that school, '[e]veryone around me spoke broad Australian, a kind of speech my parents' discipline had ruthlessly eliminated.'[70] Already before attending boarding school, then, Ker Conway says that any Australian accent had been 'eliminated' from her speech (notice again the violence of the metaphor). As

[69] Ker Conway, *The Road from Coorain*, 102.
[70] Ibid., 94.

such, her giggled protest cannot be read as the child's dismissal of the language promoted by the teachers, as much as of the means and seriousness of instruction. As a 'respectable copier of British manners', we might also question the extent to which the laughter is that of the schoolgirl or of the grown-up historian looking back at her school years. Importantly, school and home are portrayed as outside forces drilling and disciplining the child to adopt a certain behaviour. Like Ward, she balances between showing her childhood self as sceptical of the thoroughly imperial schoolroom agenda and as a product of that agenda herself.

She says of that single day at a working class school that she 'hated it from the moment I walked in the door. I was a snob, and I knew the accents of the teachers and most of the students were wrong by the exacting standards we'd had drummed into us at home'.[71] As we see with Ker Conway, the authors often make the double move of distancing themselves from their youthful pretenses ('I was a snob') and assigning the ultimate responsibility to colonial propaganda ('drummed into us').

In *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack*, Clarke, like Ward and Ker Conway, describes the equation of the English accent with high status and education, and he, too, describes both the teachers' English pronunciation and the pupils' imitation of it: 'Our masters at Combermere spoke with the accents of the gentlemen of England.' Because 'we too wanted to be educated, we spoke like little black Englishmen'.[72] The assumption, Clarke suggests, was that education could only be attained through imitation of the metropolitan accent.

Retrospectively, the youthful attempts to speak like the English are used to illustrate and mock the snobbery Clarke was taught at school as well as how he himself became a snob through colonial schooling. He describes his mother making him hot chocolate and how he would try out his new word for that quintessentially imperial drink, tea, on her: 'I preferred a cuppa toy, for I was a Combermere boy, trained to be a snob, coached to be discriminating. A cuppa toy was better than a cup of rich chocolate.

[71] Ibid., 93–94.
[72] Clarke, *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack*, 52.

England drank toy, and Little England should too'.[73] Because of the symbolic import with which Clarke invests his adopted speech, we may interpret his dismissal of the hot chocolate as a rejection of local culture and a letting down of his mother, here a stand-in for all of Barbados. His mother's response, '"Boy, you gone mad?"' may be read as his own adult response to his youthful adoption of a language and set of cultural standards far removed from those represented by his mother's Creole. While he describes his own compliance with the attitudes taught at school, he also emphasises that he was 'trained' and 'coached' to adopt these attitudes, implying that his snobbery did not emerge from within but was coaxed out of him by external agents in the shape of colonial educators.

Clearly these authors interpret their memories as being of profound importance for their sense of identity as well as being closely related to the imperial context of their childhood – a way of reading these memories spurred on by their post-colonial situation of recall. All three authors invest their descriptions of the inculcation of imperial curricula and language with symbolic import as they use them to demonstrate the influences of imperial standards on something as personal as their speech and everyday outlook. By so doing, they gesture both to the pervasiveness of those standards and to their critical adult stance on them. Interestingly, while they are at pains to expose the way the norms of the past shaped their judgement, Clarke, Ker Conway and Ward betray little awareness of how the agendas of their present might themselves be shaping their current judgement.

'It was Time to Give Up the Pretenses of the Old British Empire': Attitudes to Empire

While the authors distance themselves from the imperialism taught at school and from their youthful acceptance of it, they do so differently. That is, they use different strategies to position their past and present selves in relation to the changing imperial and anti-colonial discourses of their end of empire lives. By distancing their present from their former imperial selves and

[73] Ibid., 53.

through retrospective projection of current attitudes back in time, the authors signal to their audiences that they now dissociate themselves from their former lives in ways which reveal the influence of the present on the narration of the past.

I have already alluded to Ward's double move: while he often refers to his own past imperial sentiments, at other points, he locates such sentiment elsewhere and presents his youthful demands for a more local focus in his education. He describes his enjoyment of the literature he was taught in university and then adds '[a]nd yet something, I knew not quite what, was lacking.'[74] As he will later describe his own role in recovering Australia's folk traditions, this remark points ahead to that concerted effort to fill the perceived gap in his own cultural upbringing – a gap which he says was only vaguely felt when he was younger. He recalls asking his English professor about when they would be reading Australian literature: 'Leaning back in his chair and pronouncing the words in the manner later natural to Queen Elizabeth II in her Christmas broadcasts, he replied crushingly, "Orstralian literature! What Orstralian literature?"' [75] Ward represents his English professor at university as embodying metropolitan arrogance: in him, Britishness in speech and curricula are combined when he pronounces his lack of appreciation of colonial culture in the Queen's English. While the word 'crushingly' suggests the effect on the aspiring young intellectual who had dared ask a question so roundly rejected, Ward gets his revenge by showing who is truly the ignorant party.

Thus, Ward manages to represent his undergraduate self as participating in the Varsity cult of imitating English speech and mores and yet simultaneously as sceptical of the notion that Australia had no culture of its own, an uncanny sense that 'something […] was lacking'. This double move enables him to create a conversion story out of his life in which youthful imperialism impressed on him by his surroundings is discarded in favour of a radical nationalism while at the same time tracing the origins of

[74] Ward, *A Radical Life*, 69.
[75] Ibid.

that nationalism back in time to his school years, suggesting that he was always critical at the core.

Ward explains how having a father who was the school principal added to his personal sense of imperial loyalty encouraged by the school. As his school received the complete backing of his home, he did not have to negotiate or question different worldviews but was, so we gather, exposed to an unremitting campaign of imperial conservatism, which he accepted at least superficially. However, he suggests, perhaps this was not the case for his unconscious self:

> Naturally, if not quite inevitably, school and home influences reinforced each other in my mind, combining to make me as arrant a conservative, as loyal a Briton and as nasty a snob as ever left any great public school in Australia; and yet, though I never dreamed it then, Princes sowed a rebel seed in me too.[76]

Here, he prepares the ground for a narrative of before-and-after with this 'nasty snob' to be supplanted by the 'rebel' that the reader knows will be the end product for the author of *A Radical Life*. Yet while setting up this past self who is at first glance a completely and thoroughly 'loyal […] Briton', he indicates that already in this apparently 'conservative' self, a 'rebel seed' was contained. So what, then, was this rebel seed? Ward explains that since he knew his school was only considered second best, outdone by the private school St Peter's, he had a natural sympathy for the underdog which remained with him. He suggests that '[t]his knowledge was an influence, all the more powerful because quite unconscious until later' which came to determine his adult strivings for social justice.[77] The pseudo-Freudian interpretation that unconscious knowledge should be more powerful works to liberate his inner true self from his outward, superficial expressions of imperial snobbery. Thus, Ward achieves both a narrative of conversion from 'nasty […] snob' to radical as well as an idea that underlying this

[76] Ibid., 60.
[77] Ibid., 61.

conversion was a natural and gradual evolution of an inherent resistance to the conservative order. The youthful loyal Briton who is mocked by the author is presented as the product of external stimuli – 'school and home influences' – and thus beyond his control, whereas the 'rebel seed' was so deeply personal as to be hidden even from himself.

Upon finishing undergraduate studies, Ward concludes that: 'It is quite clear now that I was becoming a pacifist, a radical and an Australian nationalist. At the time it was clear only that all I had learnt at the University had very little indeed to do with understanding the world, my own country and my function in both.'[78] In retrospect, then, he translates what he remembers as an unfocused dissatisfaction with the tools provided by his education into the more clear-cut political attitudes he knows he would subsequently adopt. With the benefit of hindsight, he can trace a teleological path towards the radical that he would become.

As we saw above, Ker Conway speaks of her encounter with Eliot's poetry as a revelation and she mentions her childhood giggles at the language instruction and history curriculum. While such intimations of a distancing towards the imperial school agenda are located in her school years, she, like Ward, locates the most profound shift in her university years. Here, she says, her history teaching presented her with tools for analysing unequal power structures which she then went on to apply to her own country. She now began to see Australia in terms of imperial oppression, racism and class problems, as well as to insist upon reading her history in specifically Australian terms rather than reusing a class framework designed for Britain and Europe on her country. Thus she dismisses the history writing of the conservative tradition as well as of the progressive left. She says she realised that '[i]t was time to give up the pretenses of the old British Empire, recognizing that we were a Southern Pacific nation,' and she 'began to learn as much as I could about the politics and geography of the part of the world where I really lived.'[79] This sets up the Empire as fake in contrast to the real world around her, and her university experience

[78] Ibid., 84.
[79] Ker Conway, *The Road from Coorain*, 182–83.

becomes one of discovery. Significantly, that reality is revealed to her by her own efforts and not from outside influences. It is important to Ker Conway's self-narration that she was often isolated and original in her scholarly work. Thus, her university education only provides her with the interpretive concepts necessary for her independent rethinking of her country's (and her own) place in the world.

While Ward and Ker Conway make an effort to point to their early tentative criticism of the lack of local curricula, Clarke emphasises his wholehearted childhood internalisation of the standards he was taught in school to the detriment of even his personal relationship with his mother. Many other end of empire autobiographers describe a personal critique of imperialism as emerging in their school years, but Clarke implicitly locates the turning point in his attitude to Empire outside the narrated time of the autobiography.[80] Thus, as readers we have no doubt that such a point must have occurred between the time of his education and that of his writing, even if left unaccounted for. The effect is to make his schooling appear to have influenced his childhood self all the more profoundly, as he was never stirred from his Anglophilia nor provoked into anti-colonialism while at school. As a narrative strategy, this differs from that of Ward and Ker Conway, who at least occasionally project their anti-colonialism back in time while Clarke simply demonstrates through the representation of his Anglophile self that he dissociates himself from it in retrospect.

Literary scholar James Phelan has demonstrated how focalisation can be used for ethical positioning in narratives. He suggests that in the case of Nabokov's *Lolita*, the narrator, Humbert, variously identifies with and challenges the actions of his former self. This is conveyed, he argues, through dual focalisation in which the narrator and the protagonist perceive the same event but do so with different ethical attitudes: 'In terms of ethical positioning, then, the dual focalization indicates significant changes in the character-character relations and in the narrator's relation to the told and

[80] Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga*; Gladwell, *Brown Face, Big Master*; Horne, *The Education of Young Donald*; Kayira, *I Will Try*.

the audience'.[81] In Phelan's reading, Humbert the protagonist had already perceived the violence of his actions when they took place but has only come to face them at a later point and in particular through the act of telling his story as narrator. In Clarke's narrative, as in Humbert's, it is only in retrospect that the alienating effects of his education are faced while his childhood self is said to have been wholly caught up in the 'chloroform of learning'. And as is often the case with Nabokov's narrator, Clarke as narrator does not explicitly condemn neither his colonial education nor his former compliance with it, but instead writes of its effects in terms which convey his adult distaste for it.

In Phelan's reading of *Lolita*, the story is focalised through both narrator and protagonist at once, but in Clarke, it is sometimes unclear where focalisation lies. Take for example a moment during the Second World War, when the school children are commemorating the British casualties: 'The headmaster brought the sad proceedings to a close by leading us into the singing of *Rule Britannia, Britannia Rule the Waves*. And in all the singing, nobody remembered to pray for the families of the Barbadian seamen lost or dead at sea.'[82] Here, we do not know if it is the perspective of Clarke the student or Clarke the narrator through which the neglect of Barbadian seamen fighting for the British Empire is observed. Thus, it tends to be difficult to pin down the focalisation of the empire-critical remarks in the narrative, in terms of whether they belong to the child or the adult Clarke. But in terms of overt criticism, this is never articulated by Clarke the child, but always by his friends and family. Rather than saying explicitly that his idea of the world had been corrupted by his schooling, he lets his mother and his friends voice the challenge to his youthful acceptance of the standards taught in school. This is contrary to Ward whose narrating self supplies a critical interrogation of his schooling and who lets his younger self take on a sceptical attitude towards the absence of Australian topics, just like he dramatizes the moment of a turning point in his attitude to Empire instead of placing it outside the narrated time.

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[81] Phelan, *Living to Tell about It: A Rhetoric and Ethics of Character Narration*, 120.
[82] Clarke, *Growing Up Stupid Under the Union Jack*, 16.

What Phelan also reminds us of is the narrator's relation to the audience, a remark which, when applied to autobiographies, helpfully points to the significance of the context of writing. As I indicated at the outset, the political and cultural make-up of the world in which Ward, Ker Conway and Clarke wrote their autobiographies was widely different from that in which they grew up. The effects of this changed world order and the new prominence of postcolonial discourses can be traced in their autobiographical representations of their schooling.

Thus we can see Clarke as taking up the emerging postcolonial critique of colonial education which supplied a new vocabulary of cultural imposition and alienation through which to understand his own experiences. Similarly, his text performs a longing for a more authentic, local aesthetic which can be read as a belated response to colonial nationalists' search for new narratives of identity not dependent upon the imperial connection. By focusing entirely on his youthful self with no intrusions of the narrating self, Clarke avoids self-reflections on how his present perspective might also be 'chloroformed' by new societal agendas.

What is astonishing when reading about Ward and Ker Conway's changed attitude to empire is the way in which they portray their escape from an imperial mind-set to be an internal process driven by self-reflection rather than the product of those self-same societal pressures which 'colonised' them as a child. Thus, they are positioning themselves as the agents of the dynamics that led to decolonisation, a lonely and original avant-garde individually seeing the problems of colonialism: 'If my life has achieved anything,' Ward says, 'it has helped many Australians better to understand themselves and each other, by showing them the nature of their national identity or self-image.'[83] In this grand claim there is no attention to how the very idea that there is such a thing as a national identity might in itself be historically contingent. From his 1980s point of view, the Australian identity represents an inherent essence which was just waiting for Ward's revelation.

[83] Ward, *A Radical Life*, 242.

Conclusion

As mentioned in chapter one, Stuart Hall suggests that 'identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past'.[84] Hall's statement relates to the two aspects studied here. On the one hand, he describes how people are positioned by narratives. Clarke, Ker Conway and Ward bear witness to that experience when they describe how they learnt from their teachers that they had no history or culture of any worth. On the other hand, there is the positioning that the authors carry out themselves as they present us with a certain version of the past. Both these kinds of positioning relate to authorial identities, past and present.

Ker Conway, Clarke and Ward argue that the focus on Britain meant that their education failed to familiarise them with their own history and culture, to the detriment of their relationship with their own countries. They pose this critique from a time when decolonisation has changed the normative parameters of what constitutes essential cultural understanding, rendering daffodils and lists of kings more useless and anachronistic than ever. The autobiographers use that critique to position themselves in a post-colonial age in order to stress how they, despite having been brought up in an imperial school system, have not retained its outlook or perhaps never fully accepted it in the first place.

I argued at the beginning that the school can be read as an interface between the individual and society. This is where societies have the opportunity to try to shape their citizens in a relatively consistent way. It is where individuals develop intellectually as well as personally, and they do so while being subject to a programme of instruction laid down by politicians, administrators and educationists which reflects discourses that circulate in society, informing also individual teachers' take on the curriculum. This double role as at once highly managed by society and deeply personal in its consequences means that memories of education can be employed to

[84] Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', 225.

illustrate a person's interaction with and attitude to society. Thus, as we have seen, Clarke, Ward and Ker Conway use their school time experiences to describe the imperial discourses prevalent in their formative years, to illustrate through their own memories how, and with what consequences, such discourses were impressed upon young people and to proclaim their adult attitude to those discourses and their dissemination.

Through their double move, Ward and Ker Conway position their past and present selves. On the one hand, they are able to claim first hand experience with the propaganda machine of empire and to stress its efficiency in making little imperialists out of school children. On the other, they can suggest to a post-imperial audience that they had a precocious scepticism which liberates their former selves from accusations of passive compliance. Clarke, instead, stresses the pervasiveness of colonisation of the mind through stories of his wholesale adoption of the models he was presented with at school. But like Ward and Ker Conway, the descriptions of his youthful alienation and snobbery are such that readers are left with a strong impression of the adult author's critical stance on empire.

One of the most common charges in these texts is that imperial education took the metropole rather than local conditions as its starting point and ideal. Through the promotion of certain kinds of speech, literature and history, all to the neglect and detriment of vernacular experiences, the autobiographers argue that their education alienated them from their immediate surroundings. That experience of alienation is invested with authenticity and invites the reader's empathy as the writers draw on their personal memories. Through these memories, the authors position themselves, not only in relation to their school experience but to all that which education is retrospectively made to represent.

4
'Journey to an Expectation': Autobiographical Homecomings at Empire's End

> England lay before us, not a place, or a people but as a promise and an expectation. There was no going back. All the gaiety of reprieve which we felt on our departure had now turned to apprehension.[1]

> [T]he old familiar Southern Cross under which we had been born had vanished and the constellations of the Northern hemisphere, known to us through literature, were coming into view. I remember feeling a little chill, a premonition that this going 'Home' was after all a serious business, not quite the lark it had seemed when we left Melbourne.[2]

However intimate these memories of shipboard anxiety may seem, the recollections of Barbadian George Lamming and Australian Kathleen Fitzpatrick speak to the broader end of empire context in which they are written. While their background, ethnicity and their countries of origin gave particular inflections to their experience, Lamming and Fitzpatrick's autobiographical descriptions of their journeys to England are remarkably similar. Not only do they share the experience of travelling from colony to the eagerly anticipated 'Mother Country', they also couch this experience in similar language. Both portray the alienation they felt upon arrival as well as their discovery of a strong and revelatory sense of belonging to their home communities. In narrating their journey to the imperial metropole, these and other autobiographers demonstrate how the 'homeward' sojourn is retrospectively reworked as a defining moment of individual questioning of the colonial relationship. As quite personal moments of crisis and new

[1] Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile*, 212.
[2] Fitzpatrick, *Solid Bluestone Foundations*, 183.

belonging are fitted within a post-imperial narrative framework, the journey becomes emblematic of a larger search. In the following, I argue that the autobiographical challenge to colonialism is as much a consequence of, as precursor to, the dynamics of decolonisation.

This chapter considers how four autobiographers use the trope of the journey to the imperial metropole; namely George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960), and Joyce Gladwell, *Brown Face, Big Master* (1969),[3] both West Indians of mixed African and English descent, and two white Australians, Patrick White, *Flaws in the Glass* (1981), and Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Solid Bluestone Foundations* (1983). While there are national, racial and temporal specificities to the authors' experiences, there are also significant intersections of themes and concerns which reveal commonalities in their memories of imperial 'homecoming'. These highly personal recollections reflect individual responses to a collective search for new narratives of identity and belonging at a time of unprecedented strain on the verities of empire. Travel from the colony to 'Home' functions in these texts as a moment when the tension between homeland, Empire and metropole is brought into sharper focus, inviting the traveller to retrospectively recast his or her selfhood. The journey becomes the occasion for the conscious articulation of these latent fissures, not only at the time of travel but also as the traveller reflects back upon a lifetime. These experiences are recalled from a point in time when the imperial-colonial relationship has undergone substantial changes that cannot but inform the writers' interpretation of the past.

In the works to be examined here, the wider context of imperial decline and the rollback of Greater Britain defined the perspectives of the four authors and the way they perceived their changing identities in hindsight. I will argue that the recollected experience of being a colonial subject travelling to the imperial metropole was profoundly affected by the collective narrative shifts that accompanied decolonisation in the 1950s and 1960s. While writing from markedly different perspectives, as travellers and

[3] According to Sandra Courtman, Gladwell wrote her text in 1963, six years before its publication. Courtman, 'Introduction', 2.

authors these four autobiographers reveal interesting commonalities. The trope of the imperial homecoming provided a shared vehicle for reflecting on notions of belonging and their own subjectivity in the colonial-imperial relationship. It is the changes to that relationship in the time between journey and writing which occasion such reflections and impel the authors to focus on the moment of imperial homecoming.

As Wendy Webster observes, '[t]he term "home" is rich in associations' and has been used both to refer to the family home and to signify broader attachments such as 'its common use as a metaphor for the nation.'[4] In the four texts studied here, 'home' is up for negotiation and is used variously to refer to Britain, to one's country of upbringing and to intimate attachments. Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling suggest that we should think of 'home' as 'a *spatial imaginary*' which is at once 'a place/site, a set of feelings/cultural meanings, and the relations between the two.'[5] Travelling from the West Indies and Australia respectively, Lamming, Fitzpatrick, Gladwell and White had left behind homes that were half a world apart, quite distinct *spatial imaginaries*, but they were beckoned by the same 'Home', a site laden with cultural meanings, 'a promise and an expectation'. Blunt and Dowling argue that home 'can be conceptualized as processes of establishing connections with others and creating a sense of order and belonging as *part of* rather than *separate from* society.'[6] Despite their differences, the autobiographers all portray the alienation they felt upon arrival as the gaze of the metropolitan other marked them out as '*separate from* society'. But they also describe their discovery, in the imperial metropole, of a strong sense of belonging to their home communities, whether they be of a national or a more intimate kind. At the time of their travels, Britain was routinely referred to as 'Home' or 'the Mother Country', but over the course of their lifetimes, the reference to Britain as 'Home' lost its self-evidence in their national communities.[7] In their autobiographical

[4] Webster, *Imagining Home*, ix.
[5] Blunt and Dowling, *Home*, 2–3, italics in original.
[6] Ibid., 14, italics in original.
[7] Alomes, *When London Calls*, 2; Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile and Return*, 70–72; Perry, *London Is the Place for Me*, 61; Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London*, 3–4, 19, 143.

writings, the authors reflect that development on the personal level by recounting their arrival in Britain not as a homecoming, but as a discovery of other belongings.

Ideas of 'Home' at home

As discussed in the introduction, the British world was a transnational one in which the movement of people and goods was crucial to the maintenance of empire. This included both the migration from the metropole to the colonies and people who journeyed in the opposite direction, whether in search of work, education or to visit 'Home'.[8] As Elleke Boehmer has recently demonstrated, the imperial traveller to Britain did not set off in a cultural vacuum, but came with a range of preconceived notions about the relationship between his or her own part of the Empire and the imperial metropole.[9] At the time of writing one's memoirs of the journey, these notions may have changed subtly or substantially.

The four writers studied here write from a point of view when the British Empire is either starting to unravel or long gone, resulting in critical examinations of the colonial mentality which, they argue, helped to keep the Empire in place. Thus, all four authors stress the important role in their upbringing of British values and education.[10] Through British ancestry and schooling, they have been raised in a transnational middle-class Britishness. Often with the irony of hindsight, the autobiographers refer to England as 'Home' and the 'Mother Country'. In Fitzpatrick, White and Gladwell's texts, the admiration for England is laid at the door of their parents' generation, exemplified in particular by their mothers, who are seen through the upbringing and educational choices they make for their children to

[8] For 'outward' migration to the colonies, see Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*; Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. For migration from Australia and the Caribbean to Britain, see Alomes, *When London Calls*; Bennett and Pender, *From A Distant Shore*; Britain, *Once an Australian*; Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile and Return*; Davidson, '"Home" Becomes Away: Melbournians in Oxford in the 1920s'; Kushner, *The Battle of Britishness*; McIntosh, *Emigration and Caribbean Literature*; Schwarz, *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*; Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London*. For British world migration more broadly, see Fedorowich and Thompson, *Empire, Migration and Identity in the British World*.

[9] Boehmer, *Indian Arrivals*.

[10] See also chapter three.

participate in a program of indoctrination, whereas to Lamming, writing before West Indian independence, the colonial mentality is an illness of his own generation, urgently needing to be addressed. It is therefore pertinent to examine how the writers engage with the image of Britain propagated in their home countries and how they use their memories of travel to Britain to criticise colonial mentalities in ways which reflect their time of writing.

Writing in the early 1960s, Gladwell and Lamming contributed to the explosion of West Indian literary voices that were part of the cultural awakening described in the introduction. Both authors wrote while they were still in Britain where, as Lamming remarks, a new Caribbean literary scene was emerging alongside the development of political ideas of independence.[11] As Sandra Courtman remarks for Gladwell, she was writing 'in 1963, on the very cusp of nationalist movements which transformed the British colonies into the modern world.'[12] In Australia by the 1980s when Fitzpatrick and White wrote their autobiographies, there was a boom in autobiographies in which the individual coming of age story was paired with that of the nation.[13] This, too, can be interpreted as the result of a renewed interest in the national past in the wake of new nationalist aspirations.

Solid Bluestone Foundations (1983) by Australian historian Kathleen Fitzpatrick (born 1905) is about her childhood and adolescence with an Anglophile mother and a father of Irish descent, culminating in her two and a half year educational stay in England. The 1926-28 journey is a coming of age story, marking a discovery of the author's true self, while at the same time functioning as an allegory of the growing maturity and independence of her country.[14] In Fitzpatrick's autobiography, the idea of going 'Home' to England is described as the middle-class dream of her mother's generation. At the time of writing, Fitzpatrick distances herself from this dream by

[11] Schwarz, *West Indian Intellectuals in Britain*.
[12] Courtman, 'Introduction', 2.
[13] Clark, *The Puzzles of Childhood*; Ker Conway, *The Road from Coorain*; Ward, *A Radical Life*. On this boom, see McKenna, '"National Awakening", Autobiography, and the Invention of Manning Clark', 7; Bennett, 'Literary Culture since Vietnam', 255; Colmer and Colmer, 'Introduction', 3; Popkin, 'Ego-histoire down under', 109–10.
[14] Similarly, Holden reads the autobiographies of nationalist leaders as often conflating their individual stories and that of the newly independent nation. See Holden, *Autobiography and Decolonization*. See also chapter five.

ascribing to her mother the 'ambition to take her children "Home" to have their colonial rough edges filed and polished.'[15] Her insistence upon putting quotation marks around 'Home' suggests her adult scepticism. Yet we gain a clear sense that she may not always have held such a confidently ironic stance. Indeed, her descriptions of shock and disappointment upon arrival bear witness to the potency of the myths she now exposes as falsehoods.

Many of Fitzpatrick's descriptions of arriving in England revolve around the idea of the reality of England not living up to the ideal she and her siblings had been brought up to expect. They were 'downcast' to see Liverpool which 'seemed hideous and rather frightening, because sub-human types of people seemed to abound, people unlike any we had ever seen before, ragged, gaunt and grim. We had never encountered stark, desperate poverty before.'[16] While their mother remained convinced about the glory of England, refusing to count unflattering aspects like industrial poverty as part of the 'real "Home"', Fitzpatrick and her siblings are shown to have trusted their eyes, no longer inhibited by imperial blinkers. Faced with the stark contrast between rich and poor, she concludes that 'Clearly, this "Home" was a more complicated proposition than we had been led to believe.'[17] The implication throughout is that her generation had been misled and given an overly positive impression which could not stand up to first-hand experience. Here she openly acknowledges her own belief in the idea of England as Home prior to arrival, yet the ambition of visiting remains ascribed to her mother. In this way, imperial longings are securely located with her elders while Fitzpatrick is at worst misinformed.

Fitzpatrick describes an instance of sharing her alienation from the imperial centre with other young settler colonial subjects: 'We were delighted to find at our hotel some young South African friends from the

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[15] Fitzpatrick, *Solid Bluestone Foundations*, 179.
[16] Ibid., 185.
[17] Ibid., 186. In her memoir, Chinese-Zimbabwean politician Fay Chung describes her experience of coming to Britain in remarkably similar terms: 'Having been brought up in colonial Rhodesia, I was brainwashed into believing that the British education system and way of life were the best in the world. It was quite a surprise for me to find that the reality did not fit the romanticised fiction that had been created by the colonists. Britain was a class-ridden society, divided within itself.' Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga*, 69.

Nestor, fellow-colonials with whom we could discuss frankly, though *sotto voce*, how we felt this "Home" so alien to us.'[18] Here, it is precisely their status as 'fellow-colonials' and the common upbringing within a culture of imperial narratives which enables white South Africans and Australians to share a sense of alienation from the metropole they had learned to regard as 'Home'. The fact that this is a feeling shared by young people rather than those of their parents' generation serves to make that sentiment a progressive one of the future whereas Fitzpatrick's mother is repeatedly shown to remain in thrall of internalised imperial propaganda, sad at the end that her 'grand design for our Europeanisation had miscarried'.[19] The interjection 'though *sotto voce*' may be read as a criticism of a culture in which colonial estrangement from the imperial centre could not be expressed openly. However, this criticism is not only directed at her host country but also at the narratives of Britishness with which she had been brought up.

Placed in contrast with the reality of England, she suggests Australia presented itself more clearly to her – as when she comments that she had never seen stark poverty before. This strengthened her nationalist emotions as she simultaneously realised the comparative benefits of Australia and the problems of a colonial mentality. She says that while the English 'still liked having an Empire', 'they did not like its inhabitants very much and had little curiosity about the places on which the sun never set.'[20] However, while, as we will see below, she refers to the homesickness this provoked in her, she also describes her realisation that the problem was perhaps also with the Australian frame of mind: 'English people had not been brought up in the kinship myth in which colonials of my generation had been nurtured; we were not their long-lost cousins and they could not be expected to welcome and cherish us.'[21] Here, the passage ceases to be a harsh critique of the English and becomes instead an attack on the illusions of kinship propagated in the colonies which failed upon encounter with the object of affection. This brings the blame closer to home, to family and social institutions bent

[18] Fitzpatrick, *Solid Bluestone Foundations*, 186, italics in original.
[19] Ibid., 209.
[20] Ibid., 204.
[21] Ibid.

on instilling imperial loyalty in children. Retrospectively, Fitzpatrick frames her experience of English ignorance as one of her growing understanding of the imperial-colonial relationship and an appreciation that mature nationalism would require a change of mentality in Australia itself.

These ideas were not the invention of Kathleen Fitzpatrick. In 1950, cultural critic A. A. Phillips introduced the concept of the 'cultural cringe' to describe the Australian inferiority complex, a colonial mentality simultaneously hostile to intellectuals at home as well as convinced that cultural quality was to be found in the imperial metropole.[22] In *Flaws in the Glass* (1981), Australian novelist and Nobel laureate Patrick White repeatedly describes Australia as a cultural backwater which looked upon its artists as dilettante misfits; his own move to England as an aspiring writer is thus framed as the escape from this philistine society.[23] The child of an English mother and an Australian father, he was born in England in 1912 and raised in Australia but sent to an English boarding school for four years. He later returned to study and live in London as a writer before finally settling in Australia, having fought for Britain in WWII. Like Fitzpatrick, he attributes his first (involuntary) stay in the metropole to his mother's snobbery for England and the 'seed sown in an ambitious colonial mother's mind by the English head of a preparatory school in Australia.'[24] However, unlike Fitzpatrick, he does not confine cultural cringing to past generations, but stresses how '[t]his supposedly sophisticated country is still, alas, a colonial sheep-run'.[25] In a sense, White perpetuates the idea of Australian culture as inferior by elevating his past and present selves to the exception to 'that great Australian majority which prefers rose-tinted soap opera'.[26] So while Fitzpatrick suggests that Australians need no longer dwell on their shortcomings, White is less generous and uses the charge of a colonial mentality as part of a general attack on Australians as parochial and

[22] Phillips, 'The Cultural Cringe'. On the pull factor of the British cultural scene, see Alomes, *When London Calls*; and Bennett and Pender, *From A Distant Shore*.
[23] White, *Flaws in the Glass*, 57.
[24] Ibid., 12.
[25] Ibid., 231–32.
[26] Ibid., 248.

provincial.

Yet even this critical stance on Australian national character reflects a tendency in the 1970s and 1980s to criticise 'jingoistic' nationalism – what White called 'flag-wagging and drum thumping'.[27] This tendency was itself part of the revision of national narratives which followed in the wake of the loosening ties with Britain.[28] In other words, White's hostility towards Australian nationalism does not make him any less a part of a national dialogue about how the nation should be represented. A reluctant participant in the 'new nationalist' revival of Australian arts, White backed its progressive cultural politics but resisted being made a poster-boy for Australia. Upon receiving the Nobel Prize, he claimed that he was '[a] Londoner […] at heart but my blood is Australian and that's what gets me going.'[29] While signalling his reluctance to be identified with Australia, it was significantly not Britishness but the cosmopolitanism of metropolitan London that White invoked as his competing attachment.

Thus, White is also anxious to distance himself from any colonial illusions. He points to a change in his attitudes, when describing how he accepted an invitation to a luncheon with Queen Elizabeth II during a visit to Sydney in 1963, which, he says, 'A few years later, conviction and events would not have allowed me to accept.'[30] He ends the account with the relief he felt at coming home and taking off the snaring clothes to 'cook dinner for Manoly who hadn't been invited, but who was so much more distinguished than most of those who were there.'[31] Here, the down-to-earth authenticity of the home he has found with his partner is contrasted with the dressed-up snobbery for the royals he has just experienced, suggesting his at least retrospective dismissal of the party.

Like White and Fitzpatrick, George Lamming sees a colonial mentality as not only enforced by Britain but thriving locally. A major Afro-Caribbean writer born in Barbados in 1927, Lamming travelled to England

[27] White, quoted in Marr, *Patrick White*, 536.
[28] Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*, 70–77; White, *Inventing Australia*, 168–70.
[29] White quoted in Marr, *Patrick White*, 536.
[30] White, *Flaws in the Glass*, 219.
[31] Ibid., 221.

in 1950. Race is important to how he portrays West Indians' experience in Britain, while the colonial mentality informs his depiction of his home country. He thus places much of the responsibility for colonial subservience and lack of self-confidence on attitudes and behaviour which, though instilled by the colonisers, are perpetuated by the local middle-class. 'A foreign or absent Mother culture has always cradled [the West Indian's] judgment', creating a 'dread of standing up' to demand independence, while also leaving writers to choose between exile and 'the ignorant sneer of a Victorian colonial outpost'.[32] In *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960), the hybrid genre of part autobiography, part essay allows Lamming to use his personal experience as an illustration of the experiences of West Indians in England more generally and the development of a West Indian identity.[33] As Sandra Pouchet Paquet argues '[a]s a colonial subject, Lamming offers himself as a representative text to be read and as a privileged interpreter of his own historical moment.'[34] On the one hand, Lamming says, West Indian society is hostile to the 'native' author, 'questioning his very right to write'.[35] On the other, by continually associating literature with England, metropolitan-derived West Indian education had set up a natural destination for all the writers who 'had *to get out*'.[36] Thus the colonial outlook of West Indian education and middle-class snobbery towards England is shown to have simultaneously provided the push and pull factors of migration.

Lamming describes the development of a West Indian literary scene in England between 1948 and 1958 and notes that in this decade 'the West Indian acquired recognition as a writer, first outside and later within his own society. This order of acceptance was logical since a native commodity of any kind must always achieve imperial sanction before it is received back in

[32] Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile*, 35–36; 47.
[33] Compare Moore-Gilbert's reading of relationality in C. L. R. James' *Beyond a Boundary*. He argues that James challenges the western conception of autobiography by using his own life as allegorical of Trinidad and the colonial world's movement towards independence. See Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Life-Writing*, 21–24.
[34] Paquet, *Caribbean Autobiography, Cultural Identity and Self-Representation*, 134.
[35] Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile*, 27.
[36] Ibid., 41, italics in original.

its own soil.'[37] This resembles Fitzpatrick's criticism of what Phillips would call 'cultural cringing'. But Lamming does not limit this criticism to other West Indians, seeing in his earlier self aspects of the same attitude. He explains how, when his book was published in the US, he was only interested in the money the publication might bring him and not in its critical reception, since it was only important to him that it had a good reputation in England.[38] In contrast to Fitzpatrick who stresses the innate scepticism of the young, Lamming includes his own generation in the problem of imperial subservience and detects the colonial 'way of seeing' in school children as well as adults: 'if he is going to be released from this prison of colonialism', Lamming argues, 'the West Indian must change the very structure, the very basis of his values.'[39] By displacing his own desire for metropolitan recognition onto an earlier self, he includes his own generation in the problem and gives it urgency. But at the same time, he absolves his present self of the shame of such colonial delusions.

We see, then, how the time of writing is reflected in the way the authors choose to frame the problem of a colonial mentality. Writing long after the emotional ties to Britain were cut, for Fitzpatrick it is a problem already resolved in the past, while for Lamming it is still very much alive. To White, 'colonial' is part of his repertoire of disdain for a country he still considers a cultural backwater. And yet, the term clearly retains its sting for the Australian authors, who share with their Caribbean counterparts a concern with the place of the nation in the imperial order. Indeed, the proliferation in the 1980s of Australian autobiographies that foreground conflicts between imperial and national identities suggests that the imperial attachment had not been supplanted by a confident Australian identity. Rather the country was still in a state of insecurity about its new place in the world which inspired collective as well as individual musings about identities past and present.[40]

In *Brown Face, Big Master*, Jamaican psychologist Joyce Gladwell

[37] Ibid., 211.
[38] Ibid., 26.
[39] Ibid., 28–30, 36.
[40] Curran and Ward, *The Unknown Nation*.

narrates imperialist propaganda as a phenomenon of the past yet with consequences for her present self. Born in 1931, she went to London in 1953 and was still living in England at the time of writing ten years later. Her autobiography traces her spiritual journey of coming to terms with God, and her hardships in England figure as part of that inner development. Like Lamming, her status as 'coloured', albeit 'light-skinned', is defining for her experience of England and she repeatedly refers to racism making her feel unwelcome.

As for Fitzpatrick and White, and like the authors in the previous chapter, reverence for England is associated with parents and school. In this aspirational middle-class world, her mother would provide her with 'current picture-books of the English princesses', intending these as role models for her daughters.'[41] Gladwell reports internalising the values of her mother and her boarding school while also, as mentioned in the previous chapter, feeling a 'sense of loss' at giving up her dialect.[42] She explains how England seemed the only natural place for her to go: 'My goal was to go to university, to university in England. The University College of the West Indies had started the year before in Jamaica, but I had always looked forward to going to England and I would consider nowhere else.'[43] She links this to her education, 'since my mind and imagination were fed on English scenes and English thoughts, it became imperative for me to go to England, to bring to fulfilment these experiences which were begun at school.'[44] This situates her journey as the natural outcome of an upbringing which taught the superiority of the metropolitan over the local.

Not unlike White's reflection about being a Londoner at heart but having Australian blood, Gladwell describes the emergence of a conflict within herself between Jamaican nationalism and a British imperial mentality. She links this childhood conflict to her present-day feelings, seeing the two as 'David and Goliath' who are 'Siamese twins, not fighting

[41] Gladwell, *Brown Face, Big Master*, 52.
[42] Ibid., 70–71, 78.
[43] Ibid., 102.
[44] Ibid., 80.

now but still not reconciled.'[45] As she likens Jamaican nationalism to the biblical David, Gladwell leaves us in no doubt that she sees this side as both the small hero fighting against the odds and as the eventual victor. However, the image of unreconciled Siamese twins makes British and Jamaican identities into two conflictual yet inseparable parts of herself, both of continuing importance. Perhaps because she is less involved with the decolonising politics of the moment, she does not write with the kind of urgency that we see in Lamming, but nor does she consign colonial mentality to the past or to others as do Fitzpatrick and White.

The individual travels of the four writers are narrated against a background of colonial cultural subservience with each depicting themselves as decidedly less enchanted by Empire than their peers and parents. If we are to explain this in terms of memory, we need to consider the way in which retrospection affects how one recalls prior attitudes. Here, it is useful to consider Schacter's 'hindsight bias' referred to in chapter two: our inability to discount what we know has happened which forces us always to take a teleological view of the past, simply because the mind will not allow us to 'unremember'.[46] No matter how much they try, people will not be able to remember accurately a time when future events were not invested with the uncertainty that has subsequently become attached to them.[47] This has consequences on a personal level for how people recall their individual attitudes towards Empire. The knowledge that the British Empire has become discredited and that one's country is now independent invests this development with a naturalness which is projected back in time with the result that one's past attitude to Empire is recalled differently or at least attains a new meaning. The writers are responding not only to their own experiences but to cultural debates around them about colonial mentalities and national identities, entering into that debate with their personal narrative and interpreting their memories in the light of it. In addition, the experience of living in England may in itself have profoundly affected how

[45] Ibid., 81.
[46] Schacter, *Seven Sins of Memory*, 146–49.
[47] On the effect of hindsight on recollections, see also Fischhoff, 'Hindsight Not Equal to Foresight'.

these writers thought about their relationship with that country in ways they may not have been fully aware of. A key factor in this experience is the confrontation with the gaze of the metropolitan other.

The Encounter

How one is regarded by others is an essential part of the construction of individual identities.[48] When travelling, one suddenly encounters the reactions of people brought up with a different set of values and worldviews. For people travelling from the imperial 'periphery' to its 'centre', expectations about how one will be seen are confronted with the lived experience of being seen, 'reduced to [one's] being-for-others'.[49] In these four autobiographies, we find examples of how the encounter with the gaze of the metropolitan other is recalled as having affected the authors' self-perception. Retrospectively, the realisation that metropolitan Britons viewed them in a certain way is recalled as a moment which modified their sense of belonging and helped reconfigure their identities. As they describe the moment of encounter, the writers couch their recollected feelings of exclusion in a vocabulary emerging from an end of empire context. Furthermore, as we will see, the sense of being seen as an outsider gains symbolic import informed by the authors' time of writing.

For Lamming and Gladwell, race and the differential treatment it entails are described as a significant part of the experience of being in England. While her education and relatively light skin offered her middle-class status in Jamaica, Gladwell says she was disturbed to find that the English might view her as 'an easy-going coloured girl, no more' or '[a]t best … a dusky islander'.[50] When a mentally ill woman shouted 'These bl-dy blacks!' at Gladwell and her sister, she remarks that '[t]he offence was bearable, even amusing. By what stretch of the imagination were we black?', indicating that she conceived of black and white not as binaries but as

[48] As Stuart Hall argued in the Introduction. Hall, 'Negotiating Caribbean Identities', 30.
[49] As Schwarz says of Fanon in Lyons. Schwarz, 'Not Even Past Yet', 110. See also Schwarz, 'Locating Lamming', 7 and footnote 20.
[50] Gladwell, *Brown Face, Big Master*, 115.

positions along a spectrum.[51] But Gladwell describes a number of less amusing instances of racism ranging from shouts in the street, over rejection by a land-lady, to the resistance of her English parents-in-law against their son's marrying a coloured woman, and as a result she describes her constant fear of discrimination. In spite of this reported initial amusement, the repeated interpellation as black has the alienating effect of fixing her in an unwanted category. Similarly, while a common trope in stories about Caribbean migrants to Britain is the shock at seeing white working class labourers,[52] to Gladwell, the shock is rather at finding herself having to do menial work which contrasts with her self-image as middle-class. Through numerous accounts of racism, Gladwell describes how the metropolitan view of her colour and gender forced her to reckon with a white English conception of who she was which she did not share. But as we will see, these memories of racism are retrospectively turned into a spiritual lesson about accepting God's will.

As his book is as much essay as autobiography, with his own life as the reference point for larger phenomena and predicaments, Lamming uses his personal experiences of the metropolitan gaze to illustrate points about migrant experience in English society more broadly. In a programmatic treatise on the impact of imperialism and racialism on English society, he argues that the English have a certain 'way of seeing' which is caught up in the management of knowledge and language as a means of upholding the colonial order. This manifests itself in outspokenly racist as well as would-be tolerant segments of society, with racist violence and overly favourable treatment being instances of the same 'way of seeing'.[53] He describes white friends' attempts to make him out as '"different" from most other blacks' as 'the worst form of colonisation'.[54] This is 'destructive' because it pacifies resistance by making the individual feel that he belongs yet only so long as he does not criticise the racist structures on which English society is premised and which are a very real part of his experience of being in the

[51] Ibid., 133.
[52] Courtman, 'Introduction', 33; Gladwell, *Brown Face, Big Master*, 152.
[53] Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile*, 60, 73, 78–83.
[54] Ibid., 75–76.

country.[55] Thus, Lamming describes being in a 'white society' in which the limits of his equality with whites are patrolled through accusations that he has a chip on his shoulder if he insists that his white friends, too, are part of a system of racial inequality.[56] The fact that Lamming writes while still in England and while problems of racism still abound adds a different inflection to his memories so that past and present injustices are blended to create an image of English racism as both entrenched and enduring.[57]

While their whiteness has spared Fitzpatrick and White from racism and while they betray no self-awareness of their own role in racial hierarchies, they interestingly couch their experiences of marginalisation in the language of race. Thus, the one time that Fitzpatrick does mention race, she is not referring to skin colour but to English prejudice against her and other Australians: 'In England we were not exactly foreigners but decidedly we were not English either but colonials, people of an inferior race.'[58] It is significant that Fitzpatrick here chooses to employ a racial vocabulary to convey most strongly the degree of estrangement with which she was viewed by the English. Like Fitzpatrick, White never comments upon the benefits he enjoyed by virtue of his skin colour.[59] But on returning to Australia as an

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[55] Ibid. Readers of Fanon may be reminded of his observation that 'When people like me, they tell me it is in spite of my color. When they dislike me, they point out that it is not because of my color. Either way, I am locked into the infernal circle.' Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 116.

[56] Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile*, 56; 74-75.

[57] Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain*, 80–99; Waters, '"Dark Strangers" in Our Midst'.

[58] Fitzpatrick, *Solid Bluestone Foundations*, 194. Two of her fellow historians provide very similar accounts about their encounter with English people. Jill Ker Conway says 'I resented their air of superiority toward Australians.' Ker Conway, *The Road from Coorain*, 206. And in Manning Clark's recollection of his time in Oxford, he claims the English 'treated [him] as an outsider…they didn't accept me as an ordinary human being and I've never forgotten it.' Mark McKenna demonstrates that this is far from how the experience was originally set down in Clark's diaries, suggesting power of hindsight in interpreting memories through end of empire lens. Clarke, *Quest for Grace* quoted in McKenna, '"National Awakening", Autobiography, and the Invention of Manning Clark', 10.

[59] In contrast to Gladwell who is very aware of her relatively privileged position in the Jamaican racial hierarchy, suggesting that Susan Stanford Friedman is right when she argues that '[t]he white man has the luxury of forgetting his color and sex.' Friedman, 'Women's Autobiographical Selves', 39. A focus on gender would have illuminated the second part of Friedman's quote and revealed different alignments of the texts. Thus, Gladwell and Fitzpatrick both comment upon how oppressive England was to women in comparison with their home countries, while White seems to have found it easier to live there as a homosexual than in Australia, and Lamming does not register any awareness of the gender politics.

adult, he describes how he and his Greek partner were viewed as 'reffo[s]', 'the blacks' and '"foreign Jews"'.[60] Thus, Fitzpatrick and White both employ the language of racial discrimination to describe how they were viewed by other Caucasians when they felt excluded from a community to which they thought they rightfully belonged. This implies an understanding of the disenfranchisement embedded in racist discourse without an accompanying need to examine their own place in the power hierarchy sustained through such discourse. Rather than passively absorbing the discourse around them, we can see how the end of empire moment provides people with a number of tropes from which they can actively choose. The post-imperial sensitivity to racial inequality and the emerging celebration of multiculturalism in Australia provide Fitzpatrick and White with a racial language which they find useful to account for their personal experience, but only when addressing their own sense of exclusion. White even adopts it for a different context, construing a domestic rather than an imperial critique.

Whereas Fitzpatrick only describes feeling alienated in England, for White this is a more general experience. When he came back from boarding school, he found himself, 'a stranger in my own country, even in my own family', and as an adult he was viewed as a 'fake Pom'.[61] White implies that he belongs neither in Australia, being a 'Pom', nor in England, being only 'fake'. This is both the case for his youthful self and at the time of writing, as he portrays himself as an 'intruder' in Australia.[62] He thus resists the narrative of finding a truer home in Australia after being rejected in Britain. This reveals the degree to which personal concerns influence the way in which individuals respond to collective narratives. While both authors employ the language of colonial alienation, White uses it only because it fits his narrative of himself as an outsider, not to create a story of new nationalist awakening out of his sojourn in Britain.

Just as White uses descriptions of other people's perspectives in the past to not only formulate a past identity but also one of the present, so too

[60] White, *Flaws in the Glass*, 112, 138.
[61] Ibid., 46, 136.
[62] Ibid., 139.

does Fitzpatrick. But in contrast to White's repeated criticism of his country and its people, her story is full of positive remarks about Australia. As mentioned above, we may read Fitzpatrick's narrative of her journey as an analogy of growing Australian maturity and independence. For Fitzpatrick, a powerful turning point in her narrative towards her independent Australian nationalism was when she was mistaken for an American, rather than recognised as a fellow imperial citizen. In her interview for a scholarship at the University of Cambridge, she was asked where she had done her bachelor's degree. When Fitzpatrick replied Melbourne, the female don answered that Cambridge did not value American degrees highly:

> Could a Cambridge don be ignorant of the fact that Melbourne was one of the larger cities of her own British Empire? If she really thought I was American, why was she so rude? I would not have minded being mistaken for an American, I did not feel superior to Americans and at that moment I felt strongly on their side because I had just understood, for the first time, why they had felt it necessary to cut the painter with 'Home' in 1776.[63]

While one might question the probability of a Cambridge don not knowing the location of Melbourne, the important issue is not the verifiability of this extraordinary passage, but rather how Fitzpatrick chooses to make explicit her feelings of rejection. Not unlike Ward's parallel between his university professor and the Queen, Fitzpatrick suggests that the don arrogantly views the Empire as her personal property. Through the anonymous figure of the don, she links a British air of superiority with ignorance and projects her own feelings of unrequited community onto this discredited person. She remarks upon the don's arrogant tone which 'I was to come to know so well', indicating that this is not to be considered a unique event but was rather the

[63] Fitzpatrick, *Solid Bluestone Foundations*, 188.

first shock in what would subsequently become a familiar experience.[64] Fitzpatrick's surprise and bewilderment bring about, 'for the first time', her understanding of why the Americans would have wanted to part ways with Empire. This is a significant moment as it shows Fitzpatrick implicitly considering a similar Australian break with 'Home' as she 'felt strongly on their side'. The fact that she was mistaken for an American brought her to the verge of tears, fended off only by her 'black Irish pride and histrionic ability'.[65] Here we see both the importance of this rejection for Fitzpatrick on a personal level as well as the way she narratively resorts to her father's ancestry and by extension to a people historically associated with oppression by and resistance to the English. This association allows Fitzpatrick an identity in which she feels more welcome and which offers centuries of mythologised resistance to English arrogance, enabling her to distance herself from the English don who tried to 'humiliate and hurt' her.[66]

The description in Fitzpatrick's memoir of British ignorance about the empire recurs in many accounts of journeys to Britain. Thus, Wendy Webster quotes Caribbean migrants' realisation that they were not recognised as fellow-Britons in Britain:

> Travelling with expectations like this, many Caribbean migrants, like Australians, thought of their journey as internal migration within a common British world. Walter Lother from Jamaica records: 'When I came here I didn't have a status as a Jamaican. I was British, and going to the mother country was like going from one parish to another. You had no conception of it being different.' Such a view was disrupted by the discovery that their place within this British world was unknown to most British. Constance Nembhard recalled: 'We grew up under the colonial system and we knew everything about England, everything. And we came here, nobody had ever heard of Jamaica. I mean few, few, people. And it was funny, the few who had

[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid.

heard of Jamaica treated you differently. Those who had never heard, they all had the opinion that we lived in trees.'[67]

Like Fitzpatrick, Webster's sources link the lack of mutual recognition to their disappointment about the limits of English awareness of the empire, made all the worse because of the storyteller's intimate knowledge about England. In *The Road from Coorain*, Ker Conway also remarks how 'I wasn't used to being patronized by people less well read than I, nor to having the history I knew so well explained to me as though I could not possibly know anything about it.'[68] In this trope of metropolitan ignorance and exclusion, there is a contrast to the authors' familiarity with empire stemming from imperial propaganda of the kind we saw Ker Conway criticising in the previous chapter. The undertone is one of disentitlement from a community in which the authors held great personal investment.

Also invoking English incompetence, Gladwell describes an elderly woman who consistently got her maiden name wrong: 'Throughout the meal she addressed me ("spoke" is hardly the word) as "Miss Jamaica". (My surname, Nation, was simple enough, but, perhaps because it was English, the English constantly found it difficult to link it with a Jamaican face.)'[69] The description of the woman who had lived in India is not unlike that of the Cambridge don in Fitzpatrick's memoir: 'The colonial air hung about her […] the imperious voice'. And like the don, the woman is remembered as ignorant and rude in equal measures. Gladwell also lifts this experience from the anecdotal to the general when she remarks that English people 'constantly' had trouble identifying her with an English surname. That she ascribes this to her 'Jamaican face' brings the issue of race discrimination into the story once more.

Bill Schwarz argues that the confrontation between an anticipated Britain familiar through imperial culture and the reality of Britain and its race prejudice was so widespread as to become a shared West Indian

[67] Webster, 'The Empire Comes Home', 150. See also p. 126.
[68] Ker Conway, *The Road from Coorain*, 206.
[69] Gladwell, *Brown Face, Big Master*, 133.

narrative:

> From the 1940s an accumulation of individual experiences was worked into a collective story of mythic properties, whose familiar forms and repetitions we still hear today. This represented the moment when the emigrant came face to face with the lived realities of the civilisation in whose name he or she had been educated into adulthood, as distant subjects of the crown. As the literature confirms, this transformation released an array of perplexed, painful musings on the unhomeliness of the imagined homeland.[70]

In their autobiographical writings, Gladwell and Lamming write themselves into a 'collective story' in the making. Schwarz argues that 'there was no language to hand in which this simultaneous sensation of homeliness and unhomeliness could be conveyed',[71] yet over time, as he suggests, this did indeed find outlets in a 'collective story of mythic properties'. Schwarz and others have pointed to the importance of diasporas for the development of anti-colonialist arguments.[72] But conversely it is possible that it was the very fact that these journeys coincided with anti-colonialism and decolonisation which made it possible to find a language to articulate the 'dislocation between expectation and experience'.[73] Resistance to empire provided a vocabulary in which to interpret that 'dislocation' as a proof of the hypocrisy of British imperial propaganda. The existence of a multitude of accounts reiterating the same experience may have given shape to later versions in downplaying differences and stressing similarities with the 'mythic' account.[74] In a dialogue with collective narratives about journeys to Britain, individuals have both added and adapted to existing accounts. This dialogue is not restricted to Caribbean migrants to Britain. Indeed, given the

[70] Schwarz, 'Crossing the Seas', 8.
[71] Ibid., 9.
[72] Ibid., 13–18; Chamberlain, *Empire and Nation-Building in the Caribbean*.
[73] Schwarz, 'Crossing the Seas', 9.
[74] On the strength of narrative templates in shaping what memories can be articulated, see also Stoler and Strassler, 'Castings for the Colonial'; Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure'; and Thomson, *Anzac Memories*.

persistence of raced language in Australian accounts, it appears that the Caribbean story may have lent itself to post-imperial autobiographers elsewhere when making sense of their memories of disappointed belongings in the metropole.

What these four texts have in common is how the sense of exclusion is retrospectively used as an occasion for reflection on the imperial order and the hierarchies which held it in place. As travellers from the Empire to its metropole, they did not, as many other travellers, seek and expect exotic difference. [75] Rather, what attracted these authors was the assumed familiarity and relationship between their own countries and the imperial metropole, making England their natural, unquestioned destination. Their right to belong was cast in doubt both at the time of travel, as the place and people they had thought of as home failed to reciprocate their emotional attachments, and as they reflected upon their journeys after the dissolution of the imperial ties. Recalling their sense of exclusion from an end of empire perspective, the autobiographers evoked the encounter in language borrowed from anti-colonial criticism.[76]

New Belongings

While hurtful, it is quite possible that the experience of being viewed as an outsider did not immediately give rise to rejection of the imperial relationship. These personal experiences may only have been translated into a strategy for separatism years later, when the Empire is no longer the unquestioned presence it was in one's home country at the time of travelling. At the moment of writing, the autobiographer is able to make sense of such feelings of rejection and being viewed as an outsider. The writers create trajectories in which a lack, a longing for somewhere else, is turned into a gain, a new sense of belonging, both of which reflect their present point of view.

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[75] As has been often been the case, from imperial voyages of discovery to contemporary backpacking. See for instance Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*; Sobocinska, 'Following the "Hippie Sahibs"'.
[76] See chapter one.

Gladwell, White and Fitzpatrick all link homesickness to the sense of exclusion from English society and for White and Gladwell, their object of longing is the natural scene of their home countries. Gladwell explicitly relates homesickness to being constantly 'on my guard for signs of prejudice against me'.[77] As a result, she 'rejected the world around me, even the trees and the neutral things of nature. I said, "These are not mine as are the mountains and the sunshine of my own country", and their beauty brought me pain and homesickness.'[78] Given that England's climate is often linked to the cold reception she receives, it is not surprising that Jamaican sunshine should take centre stage in her descriptions of homesickness. The only other instance of reported homesickness is also linked to the natural world, when, early on, she 'longed for the mountains of my own Jamaica'.[79] While we may speculate if this is the result of later hardships in England rather than an accurate rendition of her initial feelings upon arrival, which she describes as happy, it is interesting that Gladwell's descriptions of homesickness are linked only to the Jamaican nature and climate rather than to people and ways of life.[80] This does not seem to correspond entirely to the suffering she describes, relating in particular to loneliness, lack of intellectual stimulation and the severity of having to do domestic work and take care of a baby with nobody to help. Yet there is no voiced longing for the friendships of home and the help which she might have found in her family. Important, too, however, is the emphasis on ownership. The English landscape which could have brought her happiness became the source of pain because she felt like an intruder and instead she longed for a place to which her entitlement was not questioned. Projected onto the natural world, Gladwell's sense of cultural, racial and personal exclusion seems all-encompassing.[81]

[77] Gladwell, *Brown Face, Big Master*, 163–64.
[78] Ibid., 175.
[79] Ibid., 116.
[80] Ibid., 117.
[81] This is mirrored in the memoirs of British-Indian children who recall English gardens as 'exclusionary' and contrast them with the 'sense of belonging to their surroundings' that they associate with their gardens in India. Buettner, *Empire Families*, 66.

White describes his English boarding school experience as a prison sentence and recurrently refers to his youthful homesickness.[82] But he is explicit about his longing being almost entirely devoid of people, his parents functioning only as the 'lifeline' to the Australian landscape which was the real attraction.[83] He describes dreams of being alone in nature: 'My parents played no active part in this country of the mind.'[84] While it would be fair to question his insistence that people really did not matter, White is adamant about his longing for Australia being solely related to its nature, not its people:

> As I could not come to terms with the inhabitants, either then, or again on returning to Australia after World War II, I found consolation in the landscape. The ideal Australia I visualised during any exile and which drew me back, was always, I realised, a landscape without figures.[85]

White uses his lack of social belonging in England as well as Australia to present himself as the misunderstood genius who is only at home in nature. In spite of his tortured relationship with its inhabitants, he was 'drawn back' to Australia, indicating that his affinity with the land overruled his distaste towards his fellow-countrymen. While he does not imbue nature with the same kind of nationalist mythology as some of his countrymen, this does nevertheless mirror a tendency in his contemporary society to search for a non-British Australian identity through attachment to the land. Similarly, he describes being attracted by the emerging arts scene, again suggesting that for all White's distancing manoeuvres, he is responding to the same politics of new nationalism and the cultural awakening in Australia as other Australians of his time.[86] In the end, though, he emphasises the role of his

[82] White, *Flaws in the Glass*, 9, 12, 14, 16, 46.
[83] Ibid., 14.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid., 49.
[86] Ibid., 135.

partner, Manoly, in persuading him to return to Australia.[87] Manoly, he says, 'became the central mandala in my life's hitherto messy design', implying that it is in this relationship, rather than any one place, that he feels at home.[88] In the book that has been dubbed White's 'coming-out' book, his intimate relationship to Manoly appears all the stronger in opposition to his general feeling of being outside.[89] This suggests that while the end of empire context provides some templates for how to articulate experiences of unbelonging or longing, people do not have to uniformly accept the teleology of nationalism and see themselves as naturally belonging to the nation. Like White, they may use tropes selectively to position themselves in conscious opposition to 'flag-wagging' nationalism and emphasise more personal attachments.

In Fitzpatrick's narrative, longing for home is coupled with a strengthened sense of belonging to Australia. Her journey functions as the great formative and transforming experience of the autobiography in which her admiration for Australia grows in tandem with her emerging resistance to England. Though Fitzpatrick occasionally celebrates Australian climate and nature, the strongest longing she reports was for the social values of a country which is described as egalitarian, relaxed and more equal in terms of gender.[90] She insists, too, upon the freedom of its people, which, read in the context of her sympathy with the American Declaration of Independence and the negative representation of England, may be seen as an anti-imperial protest and a foreshadowing of Australia's break with Empire.[91]

Fitzpatrick uses her own narrative of growing nationalism as emblematic of a broader development. She recalls sitting on a piazza in Rome, musing upon the truth or falsehood of the Latin 'proposition that when we cross the seas we change only our skies, not our selves':

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[87] Ibid.
[88] Ibid., 100.
[89] Davidson, 'Displaying the Monster', 1; Henderson, 'Knockabout World', 182.
[90] Davidson, '"Home" Becomes Away: Melbournians in Oxford in the 1920s'.
[91] Fitzpatrick, *Solid Bluestone Foundations*, 191.

> When we change skies, I brooded, we become aware of alternatives and find we prefer this one to that. The bent of mind which dictates choice is in ourselves but might never have surfaced into consciousness had we never changed skies. Awareness of our values helps us to know what manner of people we are, and surely an increase in self-knowledge constitutes a change in the *animum*?[92]

Fitzpatrick argues that travelling makes us conscious about inherent values and that the change of self is brought about not by a change of values but by a fuller awareness about one self and one's values. The transition from past to present tense demonstrates the author's continued investment in this idea. In the same process, the subject goes from the 'I' to the more inclusive 'we', a 'we' which could be said to encompass her fellow-Australians. This transition to a high level of inclusiveness and general applicability supports a reading of the passage as being about more than Fitzpatrick's personal journey to maturity. The allegorical upshot of her narrative is that of the young nation becoming aware of the values that make it different and finding its own way in the world.

What is remarkable about Fitzpatrick's text is not so much that she was surprised to find England different from what she envisioned (as many Australians before her had experienced culture shocks in the metropole)[93] but that this, at least retrospectively, causes her to suggest an independent destiny for her country and makes her feel that she had achieved a greater level of self-knowledge, to such an extent that this had changed her self, her '*animum*'. Here, the moment of writing is crucially significant; while alive and well when she travelled in the 1920s, by 1983, the British connection has lost its value and Fitzpatrick has to make sense of that loss retrospectively.

While Fitzpatrick's sense of alienation from England is translated into a strengthened attachment to her national community, Gladwell turns her experience of English racism into a spiritual lesson, teaching her younger self

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[92] Ibid., 195–96.
[93] Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London*, 139–80.

humility and bringing her closer to God.[94] In her description of her sojourn in England, the major themes of her book, colour and religion, are brought together. Travel takes the form of a spiritual journey in which the encounter with the reductionist English gaze was part of the hardships she must endure in order to embrace God. When she was angry at a racist landlady, she says God dismissed her prayer and asked her if she had not herself been '[g]rateful that you are not black?'[95] Here, she rejects a colonially derived racial hierarchy when realising that she had herself been as much 'offender' as 'victim' of 'pride and exclusiveness', participating in the maintenance of this hierarchy.[96] But more importantly, while the book contains many outrages at racism, what Gladwell stresses is not so much a newfound identification with other, darker, people subjected to racism, but her more humble attitude towards God. In the end she reports giving up her anger at racism in order to yield to God, trusting Him to decide what happens to her.[97] As Suzanne Scafe observes, 'it is this [Christian] faith that, in the closing chapters, provides her with the community and the strength to maintain a strong sense of self.'[98] Like White, although less antagonistically, Gladwell emphasises a personal rather than a national homecoming in the face of alienation in the metropole. Thus, it is with God that Gladwell's sense of belonging is ultimately shown to reside, and her journey is framed as the troublesome quest to find home with Him.

In Lamming's text, on the contrary, it is in the very tangible world of colonial politics that we find the locus of belonging. Whereas in the other autobiographies, the journey to Britain serves as a means of recounting a life, in Lamming, the order is reversed. Here, the individual life is used to convey a larger story about the phenomenon of exile, about the predicament of colonial thinking in the West Indies as well as in Britain and hopes for the future.

Related to such hopes is the emergence in London of a West Indian

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[94] Gladwell, *Brown Face, Big Master*, 163–64.
[95] Ibid., 163.
[96] Ibid., 164.
[97] Ibid., 179–80.
[98] Scafe, 'The Caribbean', 32.

community and its effects on the individual's identification with island and archipelago. He describes how he made this 'discovery' upon arrival:

> No Barbadian, no Trinidadian, no St Lucian, no islander from the West Indies sees himself as a West Indian until he encounters another islander in foreign territory. It was only when the Barbadian childhood corresponded with the Grenadian or the Guianese childhood in important details of folk-lore, that the wider identification was arrived at. In this sense, most West Indians of my generation were born in England. The category West Indian, formerly understood as a geographical term, now assumes cultural significance.[99]

This birth metaphor makes England the necessary site for the realisation of a shared West Indianness. Interestingly, Lamming here describes England as 'foreign territory', suggesting that it is perhaps, too, the foreignness of what used to be considered their 'Mother Country' which brings together the West Indians in England. For Lamming, then, his own experience of the journey to England becomes illustrative of some of the aspects of a larger political project to the extent of often subsuming the narrative of his own life under that larger, apparently more important, story, feeding into the Federation that was fighting for its life at the time of his writing. [100] Like the merging of individual and collective identities in Fitzpatrick, Lamming's own discovery of a West Indian identity is not presented as simply analogous to a communal birth; what he discovered was precisely this shared experience rather than his own West Indianness. This West Indian identity had political implications for the home region he had left behind, changing

[99] Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile*, 214.

[100] Similarly, Assmann and Conrad have described how "Memory activists […] appeal to regional connections and to shared pasts to back up a common moral or political agenda." (Assmann and Conrad, *Memory in a Global Age*, 9). Here, it is both the shared past realised in Britain and the individual recollection of that moment of realisation that are used to shore up a regional Caribbean identity.

the contours of that spatial imaginary from island to archipelago.[101]

We see, then, how the youthful journey to Britain is recalled by the autobiographers as a moment of revisiting personal attachments, where feelings of exclusion are translated into a new sense of belonging. The authors' individual narrative agendas determine the different kinds of belonging they emphasise, but Britain provides the setting for their memories of homesickness and home finding.

Coming Home

> As we drew nearer Australia I realised that it was not autumn but spring there, and the bare and bony land that greets the traveller at Fremantle was, in its own kind, beautiful to my eyes. I had been 'Home' and now was coming home.[102]

With these hopeful words, Fitzpatrick concludes her autobiography after having recounted how her sojourn in England had challenged and reshaped her identity and sense of belonging. Conveying her intimate connection to the land, she was able to see the beauty in the underappreciated ruggedness of her country. Recalled to us at a time when personal and national developments have moved Fitzpatrick beyond any doubts she might have held, her journey becomes the illustration of the authenticity of Australia as home set against a disappointing imperial 'Home' that has failed to deliver on its dazzling promises. Here, Fitzpatrick conveys a development that can be traced in other autobiographical narratives about travel to Britain from different parts of the Empire. As I have shown, such texts improve our understanding of how individuals respond to changes in collective narratives

[101] Lamming's remarks have since become iconic in the scholarly literature on Caribbean nationalism and migration, demonstrating the power of life writing to influence public narratives about the past. See e.g. Chamberlain, *Narratives of Exile and Return*, 12–13; Webster, 'The Empire Comes Home', 150. On Lamming's deliberate efforts to establish himself as a spokesman for Caribbean experience, see also McIntosh, *Emigration and Caribbean Literature*, 54–56.
[102] Fitzpatrick, *Solid Bluestone Foundations*, 210.

of identity in their retrospective descriptions of imperial homecomings.

The autobiographers describe both the place Britain held in the societies they grew up in, and how they personally grew disaffected with the metropole and the world system it symbolised. They all ascribe to their surroundings, parents and schools, a colonial mentality which had invested England with symbolic meaning as a *spatial imaginary* which functioned as the natural destination for their journeys.[103] But the journeys are presented as moments of disillusionment as the authors describe finding themselves viewed as strangers, so that the visited place itself became strange, ceasing to be 'home' as their assumed entitlement was thrown into question. When belonging to England as a place and a community was denied, they describe turning elsewhere for belonging and the journey thus becomes framed as the search for new identities. The autobiographers describe different homecomings, so that their sojourn in England retrospectively becomes the discovery of an attachment to God, to a partner, to a nation or a region.

The existing body of scholarship demonstrates a collective search at the end of empire for new narratives of identity. Here we see that individuals are affected by such searches in their own and sometimes idiosyncratic ways. While the pattern of re-evaluation of ties of belonging in the face of alienation in the metropole is present in all four texts, the kinds of belonging to which the authors turn cannot be reduced to a simple formula but depend on their personal circumstances. Thus, Gladwell's spiritual reconciliation is different from Fitzpatrick's nationalist awakening. These individual responses remind us of the many-faceted experiences that may sometimes be subsumed in the necessary work to paint the bigger picture. At the same time, the patterns that do emerge, even across quite different post-imperial contexts, reveal how individual memories, too, are caught up with collective changes.

These contestations of identity and belonging are profoundly affected by the time of writing. Changes engendered by their own travels and by the dissolving imperial bonds inform how the writers frame their individual

[103] Blunt and Dowling, *Home*, 2.

identities now and then. While these are experienced as quite intimate memories, they reflect authorial responses to a broader search for new identities in the end of empire period and show us how even the most personal of recollections are situated in their collective narrative context.

5
The Political made Personal: Counter-Narratives in the Memoirs of Ian Smith and Joshua Nkomo

Towards the end of his political memoir, Ian Smith, former Prime Minister of Rhodesia, reflects upon what he calls the 'false independence' achieved by Third World nationalists:

> We Rhodesians speak from our own experience, because we fought against British colonialism, and finally had to resort to UDI in order to break the shackles – a replica of what had happened a few centuries previously in the USA. The communists had successfully misrepresented the situation by depicting white Rhodesians as colonial oppressors and our black Rhodesians as the oppressed. But the truth was that our black people were better off than blacks anywhere else in Africa, with more freedom, better justice and a higher standard of living.[1]

Committed to telling 'the truth' about the end of white rule, Smith uses his personal memories to set out a counter-narrative to the dominant story in Zimbabwe and Britain alike of Smith as an unrepresentative leader devoted to keeping power for the white minority. Addressing those who still think of themselves as 'We Rhodesians' and their fellow-travellers elsewhere, Smith sees the British as the colonisers and himself as the leader who secured freedom. He draws a direct line between his own politics and the wishes of the national community, including 'our black people' on whose behalf he speaks, without considering them part of the national 'We'. In so doing, he claims legitimacy through representativeness and delimits the political

[1] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 375.

community in ways which are interestingly mirrored in the work of one of his opponents, nationalist leader Joshua Nkomo.

In her discussion of the booming genre of political autobiography in Zimbabwe, Hazel Ngoshi notes that 'the narrating subject of political autobiography is located at the core of nationalist politics and in articulating these experiences there is a suggestion that subjects' and nations' destinies are inextricably linked.'[2] Philip Holden and Elleke Boehmer, too, have demonstrated how the personal and the national are intertwined in the memoirs of nationalist political leaders.[3] In this chapter, I examine how the in-between position of the political memoir as at once personal and public is engaged by authors to enter into dialogue with collective narratives of the past through the provision of a personal, perhaps self-serving, perspective. Being often informed by a partisan agenda (and one which extends into the public realm), political memoirists consciously interact with collective memory and in doing so they vocalise certain understandings of the community for whom they write.

The past years have seen substantial interrogation of the role of history in Zimbabwean autobiography in general and political memoir in particular.[4] Ngoshi observes that there has been 'a proliferation' of political autobiographical writing about the liberation struggle and a resultant critical interest in such works.[5] This chapter takes up the challenge posed in this scholarship to read the texts coming out of Zimbabwean independence not to judge whether the authors tell the historical truth, but to study how they go about narrating the past and their own place in it. The two texts are by nationalist leaders from very different ends of the political spectrum who

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[2] Ngoshi, 'Masculinities and Femininities in Zimbabwean Autobiographies of Political Struggle', 121.
[3] Boehmer, *Stories of Women*, 69; Holden, *Autobiography and Decolonization*, 5.
[4] Afejuku, 'Autobiography or History?'; Alexander, 'Political Prisoners' Memoirs in Zimbabwe'; Chennells, 'Self-Representation and National Memory'; Hlongwana, Maposa, and Moyo, '"Personalization or Fictionalization of National History in Zimbabwe?"'; Hove, 'Imagining the Nation'; Hove and Masemola, *Strategies of Representation in Auto/Biography*; Javangwe, 'Contesting Narratives'; Moyo et al., 'Remembering or Re-Membering?'; Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 'Reinvoking the Past in the Present'; Ngoshi, 'Masculinities and Femininities in Zimbabwean Autobiographies of Political Struggle'; Tagwirei, 'The Simultaneity of Past and Present'; Vambe, 'Fictions of Autobiographical Representations'.
[5] Ngoshi, 'Masculinities and Femininities in Zimbabwean Autobiographies of Political Struggle', 121.

have both had a central role in the story of the end of empire in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe: ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo's *Nkomo: The Story of My Life* (1984) and Rhodesian Front leader Ian Smith's *The Great Betrayal* (1997).

Unlike most of the political leaders studied by Boehmer and Holden, these two authors do not write their memoirs from a victorious position. At the time of writing, they have both been put out of power and their texts reflect the narrative challenges that this presents them with. As we saw in chapter two, people will often narrate their lives according to culturally available life scripts that dictate what events are deemed significant. Similarly, we saw how master narratives are important to the way the interface of individual and collective memory is theorised. Yet such scripts and narratives are important also because of the way in which certain individuals resist them. Hegemonic narratives can provide structuring tropes for a memoir even if these are taken up only to be challenged, rejected or inverted. In Nkomo and Smith's memoirs, we find examples of counter-narratives which respond to a political context in which their role as leaders has been discredited.[6]

This chapter takes its point of departure in the overarching question of how individual political memoirs about the end of empire are written in dialogue with collective narratives. In unpacking this question, I start out by considering how Smith and Nkomo engage with their context of writing before I examine some of the tropes that recur across the texts. The first of these is the idea of popular political awakening as a result of adversity. Another is the trope of rejection of a deteriorating system, often invoked to stress personal consistency. A third is the familiar trope of representing 'the people'. Finally, I look at how the authors employ ideas of betrayal strategically to situate themselves in history in opportune ways. All of these tropes are significant in emphasising the political integrity and legitimacy of the author. As we will see, the individual-collective dialogue manifests itself in several ways. Firstly, a number of interpretations of community and 'the

[6] Alexander and McGregor observe a similar pattern in the war stories of guerrillas from ZAPU's military wing, ZIPRA, who used their memories of the war to 'redress' the ZANU-PF monopolisation of the war. Alexander and McGregor, 'War Stories', 82.

people' are at work in the texts and the authors situate themselves in relation to these communities. Secondly, in writing their political memoirs, they are clearly affected by narratives in circulation past and present. Thirdly, and relatedly, the authors strategically use the personal narrative to write back to and challenge how the community narrates the story of the end of empire.

While the works of Nkomo and Smith seem to have been written in collaboration with ghostwriters and editors, this is only acknowledged outside the main text, in the preface or title page.[7] This serves to represent the political leader as in control of the narrative and by extension in control of history.[8] By positioning themselves as the sole authorial voice, they also claim the authority of that voice. For two politicians who have been defeated and whose version of the past is being challenged by societal master narratives, this reclaiming of power and narrative control is important for the counter-narratives that they want to provide. As both texts are clearly intended to be read as the politicians' own accounts of the past, I will interpret them as such. In the following, I will consider what the narrative context means for the way in which they represent their own stories and the way in which they engage and counter different narrative communities.

Context of Writing

Nkomo: An Occasion for Speaking

Joshua Nkomo wrote his memoir in 1984 from exile in Britain partly to document his own role in the conflict leading to the overthrow of white minority rule, and partly to criticise the new Robert Mugabe government. As we will see, he wrote in response to ZANU-PF attempts to undermine his legitimacy, as well as to expose the problems with human rights violations following independence, such as the crackdown on political opposition in Matabeleland. While accounts of this massacre were among the first indications that Zimbabwe's independence was not an unqualified success,

[7] In the first edition of *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, the ghostwriter Nicholas Harman is not even mentioned on the title page.

[8] Compare Barbara Caine's discussion of the role of Mandela's ghostwriter Richard Stengel. Caine, *Nelson Mandela and Long Walk to Freedom: The Making of a Text*.

they were still not widespread enough to provoke international condemnation.[9] We may read Nkomo's memoir as a reaction to what he saw as ZANU-PF's excessive hold on the narrative of the liberation struggle and of its own government's unrivalled success story.

In Nkomo's memoir, the occasion for writing is vividly dramatised from the outset. He actively engages with his situation in the introduction to explain how he came to be in exile and why it is necessary for him to write. He says that to the new leaders of Zimbabwe, he 'symbolised the national unity that they rejected' and had to flee the country after attempts to kill him. 'The greatest irony of my life is that I have written this record of it in Britain, the country that for so many decades refused our people the freedom they fought for. But the right to publish my memoirs is one that I gratefully claim even from my former oppressors.'[10] By pointing to this 'irony', he suggests that some natural order has been disturbed, not so much in that he is able to write in the country of his oppressors, an opportunity he 'gratefully claims', but in that he should have to do so because he is no longer welcome in Zimbabwe.

In the first chapter of the book, he continues this line of thought as he explains how he had been accustomed to hostility on the part of the white minority government, '[b]ut', he adds, 'nothing in my life had prepared me for persecution at the hands of a government led by black Africans. This book will, I trust, make clear what had gone wrong and why. But first I must explain how I got away and lived to tell the tale.'[11] This sets the scene for the book as the story of what went wrong and his own place in that story. He takes this up again in the last pages of the memoir, so that the story of exile in Britain provides the frame for the rest of the narrative. In the last pages, we understand that while starting to write in Britain, he has now returned to Zimbabwe and we thus gain a rare sense of how the actual production of the text means that the moment of writing is not a single instantiation in time

[9] Phimister, '"Zimbabwe Is Mine"', 471. See also chapter one.
[10] Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, xiv.
[11] Ibid., 1.

but stretches over time, during which the conditions of the author may change.[12]

Nkomo thematises the very act of writing the memoir,[13] the 'ironic' context of exile in Britain and alerts us to his own circumstances. In addition, by drawing attention to the occasion for speaking, he also emphasises the relevance of his narrative. There is a sense that his story needs telling so that people may understand what went wrong, not just for himself but for the country. From the very first paragraph of his memoir, Nkomo weaves together the personal and national stories:

> From my earliest youth I thirsted for freedom. When I became a man, I understood that I could not be free while my country and its people were subject to a government in which they had no say. In middle life I fought for national independence, and I was sixty-three years old when, in 1980, Zimbabwe emerged as the last of Britain's African colonies to win nationhood. Yet even then the cause of freedom for the people had not prevailed. We had won our national right to independence, but our human rights were still suppressed.[14]

As this opening indicates, the life of the nation and that of the person are so intertwined in the narrative that we may safely assume that crisis in Nkomo's own life corresponds to and reflects a crisis in the life of the nation. As Boehmer says with reference to Mandela, 'the leader's experience, character and physical presence are set up as metonymic of the national.'[15] In the same way, Nkomo invites us to read his lack of freedom as metonymic of a national lack of freedom. Nkomo's story is presented as offering privileged insight into Zimbabwean history as well as providing a counter-narrative to the story of successful independence.

Nkomo wrote his memoir while the ZANU-PF government was working to establish a one-party state and seeking to 'de-legitimise' him and

[12] Ibid., 244; 252.
[13] Although, as noted above, the presence of the ghostwriter is silenced.
[14] Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, xiii.
[15] Boehmer, *Stories of Women*, 69.

undermine his claims to power by representing him as 'an inconsistent and indecisive politician who offered weak leadership'.[16] He thus challenges the official narrative of liberation by insisting that it is still incomplete as long as human rights are suppressed. This sense of being still *in* history, rather than *after* it, is stressed in the introduction: 'This book is not a history – one day, if I am spared, I may contribute to the writing of one with a happy ending.'[17] We understand, then, that there is unfinished business and that Nkomo believes that he still has a role to play in bringing the nation its 'happy ending'. Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Wendy Willems argue that Nkomo uses his memoir to refute the ZANU-PF representation by providing a counter-narrative which establishes his nationalist credentials.[18] Such countermemories were common among the defeated party in the years after independence, and Nkomo's memoir would have found a sympathetic ear within this marginalised narrative community.[19] In Smith's memoir, too, we can trace the parallel existence of several narrative communities as he similarly claims the voice of the critic who speaks truth to power.

Smith: Dissident Hero

Ian Smith first published his memoir as *The Great Betrayal* in 1997 and republished it again in 2001 as *Bitter Harvest*. This is a text which clearly reflects the position of its writer as member of a diminishing minority of whites in Zimbabwe, still convinced that he was in the right in fighting black nationalists. When Smith wrote his memoir, the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe was deteriorating, causing growing international concern, especially by the time of republiation in 2001, when the land reforms provoked harsh criticism of Mugabe's leadership.[20] While ZANU-PF was ever fiercer in promoting its 'patriotic history' of independence,[21]

[16] Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 'Reinvoking the Past in the Present', 194–96.
[17] Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, xiii.
[18] Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 'Reinvoking the Past in the Present', 197–200.
[19] Alexander and McGregor, 'War Stories'.
[20] Willems, 'Peasant Demonstrators, Violent Invaders', 1773. See also chapters one and six.
[21] Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 'Cultural Nationalism and the Politics of Commemoration'; Raftopoulos, 'Nation, Race and History in Zimbabwean Politics'; Ranger, 'Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation'.

Mugabe's failings were interpreted by some as a vindication of Smith's government's refusal to relinquish power to the black majority.[22] In writing his memoir, Smith responds to such national and international narrative developments in the interpretation of the Zimbabwean past and present.

When studying Smith's memoir, it becomes clear that a memoirist may situate a story against several narrative communities. Thus, he writes against the shared narrative of one group and uses the existence of that narrative community to position himself as a dissident. But simultaneously he caters to a different narrative community in which he is supported in his self-interpretation as a valiant but misunderstood hero. When Smith first published *The Great Betrayal*, Zimbabwe had been independent for 17 years and Mugabe's government was asserting increasing control over the narrative of the national past. Yet at the same time, there existed a community of white settlers in and out of Zimbabwe who cherished nostalgic memories and compared them favourably to the present.[23] In his memoirs, Smith seems to be writing with both narrative communities in mind. Thus, he is able to cast himself both as the lone voice telling the unpleasant truth that is suppressed by the government and to indulge in a self-representation as the spokesperson of a community which refuses to die. As we will see, he even sets up his past self as representative of the wishes of the majority of the country's population, not only of its white minority.

Like Nkomo, Smith brings attention to the moment of writing, although he does not adopt it as the narrative frame, but rather interjects it parenthetically. The effect of this inclusion is to challenge what he sees as the false success story of Zimbabwean majority rule. He draws a stark contrast between the peaceful past when he was prime minister and the writing present by taking an example from his own home which he says used to be unstaffed and easily accessible for visitors, whereas, as he adds in an aside in brackets: '(Today, it is a veritable fortress surrounded by soldiers with automatic rifles, barbed-wire entanglements, a bullet-proof vehicle in which to travel surrounded by armoured lorries, followed by an

[22] Pilossof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, 135–43.
[23] Uusihakala, 'Memory Meanders'.

ambulance.)'[24] Here, we are suddenly made aware of the moment of writing as past and present overlap in a palimpsest which brings out the jarring contrast. Through reference to his own home, Smith makes the political personal and brings to our attention the conditions under which he is writing. We receive an image of someone besieged, forced by outside circumstances to protect himself, yet stoic enough to find this worthy only of a parenthetical comment.[25]

As we will see below, Smith's narrative is informed by instances of other people letting him down and a distinct sense of being a lone fighter, abandoned by those who should have been his friends. Thus, Smith becomes, as Bill Schwarz suggests, 'the last white man.'[26] As betrayed victim-cum-valiant dissident, Smith is able to speak from the position of the underdog, a last fighter for British, Christian values in a world where those values have been abandoned in the most cowardly fashion by his former friends and violently suppressed by the Mugabe regime. While writing from within Zimbabwe, Smith can be read as writing from a position of internal exile, as the country he feels he belongs to, Rhodesia, no longer exists.

Schwarz also notes how Smith 'speaks to those remaining souls he can persuade to listen'.[27] Several recent works on memory and white Rhodesian identities have noted the continuing existence of a transnational commemorative community in which wistful tales of the Rhodesian past are shared.[28] Perhaps it was the presence of such audiences which prompted the republication of Smith's memoirs in 2001. Indeed, if read as a comment on the recent evictions of white farmers, the new title, *Bitter Harvest*, suggests that Smith was deliberately targeting and seeking to enlarge an audience sympathetic to his reading of Rhodesian/Zimbabwean history.

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[24] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 107.
[25] For the idea of whiteness under siege, see Damm Pedersen, 'Independence in Belgian Congo through British Eyes'. See also Damm Pedersen, 'African Decolonisation and the Fate of Britishness C. 1945-1975'; Lake, 'The White Man under Siege'.
[26] Schwarz, *The White Man's World*, 424.
[27] Ibid.
[28] This will be discussed in further detail in chapter six. See Lowry, 'Rhodesia 1890–1980', 148; Pilossof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*; Schwarz, *The White Man's World*, 415; Uusihakala, 'Memory Meanders'.

So while in Nkomo's text the change in the time of writing happens within the text itself as the end is written later than the beginning (or at least appears thus), in Smith's case, the same text is republished with minor but significant changes.[29] The 2001 edition includes a 'Postscript' from 1998 and a 'Foreword' and 'Afterword' from 2000. In these, he clearly feels vindicated by recent events, opening the Foreword with the words: 'When I look back over what has happened to our country over the past 20 years, it would be easy for me simply to say: "I told you so."' He elaborates that while the country he handed over was 'the bread-basket for Central Africa', Mugabe has squandered its potential: 'Today it is total disaster, absolute chaos'.[30] These additions demonstrate the continuing dialogue between author and his surroundings, as Smith adapts his text to intervene in the most recent historical development. However, to interpret the country's recent fate he reiterates the story of British betrayal of Rhodesia which dominates the main body of the text – a story in which he stars as the protector of Rhodesians fighting against the odds.

Nkomo and Smith both respond to the context of writing by presenting their memoirs as counter-narratives. To legitimate their stories, they position themselves as leaders who enjoyed popular support in a growing movement against an unfair system.

Political Awakening

As we turn now to look at instances of political awakening, my central concern is how this awakening is used in the present and what relationship between the individual and the collective the authors seek to convey. The

[29] As Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems discuss, Nkomo's memoir, too, was republished. However, this happened in 2001, two years after his death. In the intervening years, the Unity Accord had been reached and the government used its collaboration with Nkomo to argue that it represented all of Zimbabwe. It had thus become opportune for ZANU-PF to celebrate Nkomo as Father Zimbabwe and appropriate his name and memory after his death to channel the popular support for him to their own party. In the ZANU-PF interpretation, Nkomo's demands for unity could be used to quell resistance to the government as attempts to spread disunity. However, when Nkomo wrote, this change of heart of the government was still in the future. Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 'Reinvoking the Past in the Present', 202.

[30] Smith, *Bitter Harvest*, Foreword.

tropes I will study here are the mobilising power of adversity, the rejection of a system and representing 'the people'. Firstly, the writers point to the worsening of conditions as a key factor in popular political awakening. This may be read as part of a justification of later actions and a defence against accusations that one's group applied unnecessarily harsh measures. Smith and Nkomo use these moments, then, to set the scene for a long war with many lives lost and to tell their readers how it became inevitable. Secondly, for both authors, political awakening is linked to the personal rejection of a system or a set of loyalties. This, too, works to defend their radicalisation as they represent themselves as consistent in their politics as they came to the conclusion that it was impossible to pursue their agenda within the established system. When describing political awakening, then, the memoirists have a chance to portray not only their own contributions to the struggle but also the injustice of the system they were up against, and to use their texts to entrench that moral gulf for posterity. Thirdly, in terms of the relationship between collective and individual, the authors each position themselves as the inspiring leader of a popular movement. They employ this self-image to lend credibility to their political statements. Thus, Nkomo and Smith both represent themselves as the voice of 'the people' and use that position to suggest that their political agenda was not self-interested but represented the concerns of the nation at large. As we will see, the authors' definitions of 'the people' are contingent on the situation, expanding or narrowing depending on the rhetorical needs of the writer. But first, let us look at how they describe the people's journey to political awareness.

Popular Awakening

At the level of the collective, the authors often see worsening circumstances as the precondition for the kind of popular dissatisfaction needed for a political movement to gain ground. In these descriptions of popular resistance against adversity, the authors find a useful vehicle for explaining their own involvement in a violent conflict.

A consistent theme in Smith's narrative is the descent of the rest of Africa into chaos as European powers bowed to the nationalist pressure for decolonisation. In the case of the Congo Crisis, he describes 'the white people being caught up in the usual pillage, murder and rape associated with such events'.[31] Watching refugees from this conflict had, he says, 'a profound effect on our people, making them realise all the more positively the danger of capitulating to the metropolitan powers, who were ready to cut and run at the drop of a hat.'[32] As he points to the danger that came not from the African nationalists but from the lily-livered metropolitans, he foreshadows his preoccupation with the British 'betrayal' in not assisting Rhodesia to withstand the nationalist pressure.[33] But through the image of an Africa in chaos, he also justifies the need to resist nationalists at all costs, as readers are made to understand that Rhodesia would otherwise suffer the same fate.

Significantly, this is not just presented as his own observation in the past. Rather, we are told, 'our people' as a whole reached a conclusion which was similar to his own. He thus sets up an image of a political awakening which was both 'profound' and widespread and in tandem with his own perspective. He continues: 'A political awareness had suddenly gripped Rhodesians, as there was a general feeling that the hour had come, and that if they did not arouse themselves they were going to lose their country altogether.'[34] Here, he suggests the mobilising force of the threat of 'losing the country' as he calls it. This quote is part of a passage about his newly-founded 'Rhodesian Front' party and their road to electoral success, and as such, we can see how Smith positions himself as having provided the outlet for this new 'general feeling'. Smith's vocabulary suggests that this was a mass awakening gripping 'Rhodesians' as a whole. Thus, Smith uses the political memoir to link his individual political agenda to that of 'the people'.

A similar invocation of 'the people' is found in Nkomo, as he describes how growing government repression in the 1950s led to protests and riots,

[31] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 44.
[32] Ibid.
[33] See discussion of this below.
[34] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 47.

and then: 'Parliament replied by bringing in new measures of discipline, like the Unlawful Assemblies Act: this in turn increased popular resentment, and created a new political spirit among our people.'[35] As we will see below, both Smith and Nkomo lay claim to the collective through phrases like 'our people', although they are invariably referencing different groups with the term. Both politicians refer to the widespread popular awakening to describe a movement with which they themselves sympathise and which they also galvanised. And like Smith, Nkomo points to deteriorating conditions to explain the arousal of political feeling and by extension the need for action. In Nkomo's narrative, it was government pressure which led to riots and 'a new political spirit' and he is thus able to justify popular protest as the reasonable response to strong arm tactics.

As the authors describe a popular political awakening born out of the threat of violence, they justify their own participation in violent actions as a necessary response of self-defence rather than aggression.[36] But interestingly, once the necessity for violence is established, the writers actually seem keen to stress their endorsement of it. Smith continuously emphasises his own fighting experience and his pride when 'terrorists' were killed.[37] For Nkomo, accused in the 1960s by his party members for not being radical enough, it seems paramount to stress that it was he who started the armed fight and secured the first weapon supply as well as his experience as commander-in-chief.[38] As they describe the emergence of a popular political agenda in response to worsening conditions, the authors align that agenda with their own. As we will see, Nkomo and Smith position themselves as the catalyst and voice of that popular awakening, and they suggest they were involved on a very personal level in responding to the escalating political situation. It is to these responses that we now turn.

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[35] Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, 70.
[36] For a very similar pattern in the stories of former guerrillas, see Alexander and McGregor, 'War Stories', 85.
[37] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 9–24, 184–95, 230.
[38] Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, 102–3, 106, 163–72.

Personal Consistency

At the centre of the personal political awakening in both memoirs lies the realisation of systemic inequities. For Nkomo, this system is white minority rule, whereas for Smith it is the new, racially mixed British Commonwealth.

Nkomo describes a growing recognition of the systemic nature of oppression. He recounts how his experience as a social worker with the railway lines enabled him to see that there was a pattern in the injustices of the white regime against black people. These were not just localised instances but part of a system that was wrong, he suggests: 'It was that experience of ordinary people's difficulties, in all walks of life and in every corner of the colony, that convinced me that no partial political reform could set matters right.'[39] He transposes this realisation to the level of the collective when he says that '[m]ore of our African people began to see that they must no longer merely complain about particular grievances; they had to move on to criticise the system itself, to develop a political programme on their own account.'[40] Nkomo suggests that it was an enabling experience to realise that one's problems were not isolated instances but were part of a system of oppression, as it meant that it was possible to combat the system rather than just its symptoms.

While this recognition was useful in mobilising the collective, it also had personal implications for himself as Nkomo gave up on trying to change the system from the inside: 'I could not help feeling that my work for the railways was a sham – I was trying to patch the cloth of social problems, when what we needed was a whole new blanket.'[41] In the transition from the first person singular to the first person plural, he demonstrates that his individual refusal to continue within the official framework was linked to the national fight for 'a whole new blanket'. Nkomo's decision to resign came in 1953 after his failure to win a seat in the first federal election in the Central African Federation had revealed the absurdity of the electoral process: 'My conviction grew that the whites would never give us our rights until they

[39] Ibid., 46.
[40] Ibid., 60.
[41] Ibid., 65.

were forced to do so.'[42] He describes his vanishing belief in the system and the search for ways to challenge it outside of official Rhodesia.

The standard response of the Smith regime to the demands of the nationalists was that they were terrorists intent on tearing up the fabric of Rhodesian stability and prosperity.[43] Thus, we can read Nkomo as providing a counter-narrative to that insistent claim, his target here being more in the past than in the present as he protests against the discourse of white Rhodesia. By pointing to his time as a social worker, he suggests that he had tried first through peaceful means to change the country but had realised that the change he envisioned was not possible through such means. He explains his entry into politics and his increasingly active role in the independence movement as a result of his realisation of the systemic nature of injustice and the need to combat it from the outside. Thus, he represents himself as not so much radicalised as seeking new and broader venues through which to achieve the same goals.

This emphasis on the consistency of personal conviction is even stronger in Smith's memoirs, but he uses it not to dispel accusations of terrorism but accusations of treason. Whereas Nkomo rejected a system he had never been particularly enamoured with, Smith depicts his loss of confidence in the system he had trusted the most: the British Empire. Smith describes a transition in which Britain went from being a close friend to a threat to Rhodesia through its pressure for a quick transition to majority rule. He links this to a betrayal in Britain of the core values of the empire:

> Within Britain itself, we were landed with a socialist government, hell-bent on appeasing the cult of Marxism-Leninism, at the expense of the old traditional values of the British Empire. This was never part of my tradition and culture. But most important, and above all else, was the treatment to which we had been subjected: the breaches of agreements, the double standards, the blatant deception and blackmail

[42] Ibid.
[43] Pilossof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, 2; This is a terminology that Smith maintains in his memoir and which he insists is correct. See Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 407.

> with which we were confronted. To put it crudely, we had had an absolute bellyful. Rhodesians simply wished to be left to lead their own lives.[44]

We are made to understand that it was not Smith who had changed, but the British who had sold their traditions down the river in order to appease the newly independent nations in the Commonwealth. As a consequence, he argues that Rhodesia was forced to break with Britain, after many attempts to avoid it. He moves from 'I' to 'we' to 'Rhodesians', so that the personal issue of Britain abandoning 'my tradition and culture' is linked to the concerns of 'Rhodesians' as a whole. There are many instances in which Smith foregrounds his own role as a prime minister in resisting and challenging the British pressure which he identifies closely with politicians and bureaucrats rather than with the British people. He describes telling the British Prime Minister where Rhodesia stood: 'Looking Wilson straight in the eyes I stated in a measured and deliberate tone that they were placing us in a situation where we would have no option but to take matters into our own hands.'[45] The determination of the Rhodesian people becomes expressed in Smith's ability to talk straight and stare Wilson down, so that the power struggle between the two nations is carried out as a duel between two men. The suggestion here is that the decision to declare independence was only made after seeking out all other possible alternatives and only became necessary because of the actions of 'Perfidious Albion'.[46]

Smith's rejection of Britain is far more passionate than Nkomo's rejection of official Rhodesia as he, while working within the government system, does not give the impression that he was ever particularly fond of it. Smith, on the other hand, takes pride in his imperial British heritage and suggests that he sought independence only to be able to maintain that heritage. Even more so than Nkomo, Smith is at pains to stress his own political consistency and uses the degeneration of the system he used to

[44] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 101.
[45] Ibid., 92.
[46] Ibid., 71.

believe in to justify the 1965 Unilateral Declaration of Independence as an act of loyalty to the values which used to inform the British Empire. As we will see below, this rhetorical move is used to counter the (unspoken) accusation which haunts his narrative that his proclamation of independence was tantamount to treason.

This theme of unwavering personal consistency can also be seen in the way both authors mobilise childhood memories to trace the origins of their politics to an early age. Thus Nkomo describes his precocious sense of disorder:

> Before I even began to study I had learned one big lesson. There was something upside down in my country. To me, Father was the greatest man in the world. But there were people who treated him disrespectfully. […] These were the pale people, the Europeans, *Amakhiwa*. I understood almost without being told that they had taken something from us. Later I discovered that what they had taken was our country.
>
> Setting that right has been the ruling passion of my life.[47]

Here, Nkomo points to his political understanding as instinctive and independent of his studies, something he did not need to be told. He projects his adult politics back into the past as he connects this childhood memory of perceiving that something was amiss in the country to his life ambition to 'set that right'.[48] As discussed in chapter three, the political potency of this kind of childhood memory increases in retrospect. But the message is clear: his involvement with the liberation movement was not the result of self-serving expediency but sprung from a deep-seated sense of injustice, thus underlining the consistency of his politics.

Smith frames his politics not as ideological but as a matter of maintaining the principles he had been raised with. He describes growing

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[47] Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, 16, italics in original.
[48] Similarly, Nelson Mandela says he was politicised from birth. Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 84.

up in a community which was 'more British than the British', where 'we were all brought up and taught to live' with respect for flag and anthem.[49] He links these principles to his pioneering parents who 'strove to instil principles and moral virtues' in their children and were both 'awarded MBEs for service to their community and their country.'[50] Thus, like Nkomo, he points to the very early origins of his politics in principles which are linked to imperial virtues. It is these values that he refers back to when he says that the British had betrayed his tradition and culture, while he himself had remained consistent and loyal.

In this way, both writers represent themselves and their aims in terms of deep, immutable personal conviction – it was circumstances outside themselves which meant that they had to adopt more drastic means. Both authors grappled with a sense of profound alienation from the cause that had determined their lives, and their insistence on their own steadfast adherence to principle needs to be read in that context. We may understand this in terms of the 'consistency or change bias' in the way people recall past attitudes which arises from their 'implicit theory' as to whether these opinions are likely to have been similar or different to those of the present.[51] As they project their politics back onto a childhood self, Smith and Nkomo avoid accusations of radicalisation; they were simply adapting to a desperate situation and defending principles they had believed in from very early on.

An additional effect of this is that it promotes an image of the author as only reluctantly assuming power. As Hlongwana et al. propose for Nkomo, '[h]e wants to project the image of an altruistic nationalist driven by the sordidness of black existence that pressganged him to take the bull of colonialism by the horns.'[52] Thus, Nkomo describes himself being 'hijacked into the presidency' of the new ANC in 1957.[53]

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[49] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 3.
[50] Ibid., 7.
[51] Ross, 'Relation of Implicit Theories to the Construction of Personal Histories', 342; Schacter, *Seven Sins of Memory*, 138.
[52] Hlongwana, Maposa, and Moyo, 'Sithole, Nkomo, Muzorewa, and the Birth of Zimbabwe', 329.
[53] Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, 71.

In Smith's narrative, the reluctance to assume power can be linked to his loathing of politicians whom he accuses of being motivated by attempts to gain votes rather than governed by principles. At the very end of his narrative, he commends Nelson Mandela and predicts that he will become the first black statesman in Africa, adding in a footnote: 'A statesman thinks of the next generation – a politician thinks of the next election.'[54] He sets himself up as such a statesman through a self-portrait in which he only entered politics when beckoned to do so and out of a sense of responsibility, and in which he remained faithful to his principles in the face of duplicitous British politicians. Smith says he at first declined when he was approached by the Liberal Party and only accepted when they approached him a second time, appealing to his sense of responsibility and the need for good leadership.[55] As Javangwe argues, Smith's 'feigned reluctance to take on the leadership role is a strategic narrative act that allows the subject narrator to submit to the people's call, thus he becomes the servant of the people.'[56]

Just as the popular political awakening is portrayed as the response to an increasingly adverse situation, so too the writers describe their own turn to politics as the culmination and inevitable outcome of their personal consistency. By stressing the systemic nature of injustice, the authors counter any accusations of their radicalisation into terrorist or traitor with the claim that the system itself had become indefensible and had thus annulled the ordinary rules whereby treason and terrorism were judged. Indeed, Nkomo argues that it was the white regime which was terrorising its citizens,[57] and Smith argues that it was the British who had betrayed Rhodesia, not the other way around. Retaliating to accusations against themselves, they use their memoirs to paint a negative image of their opposition and maintain a principled self-image. Above all, these memories of rejecting the system, allow the authors an opportunity to show their individual contribution to a

[54] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 412.
[55] Ibid., 30–31. Compare also the title of the memoirs of Clifford Dupont who was president in UDI Rhodesia, 1970-75: Dupont, *The Reluctant President*.
[56] Javangwe, 'Contesting Narratives', 87.
[57] Nkomo says he told Smith that 'the biggest of all the terrorists was himself.' Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, 148.

national struggle. In political memoirs, this is a central trope which plays on the role of the politician as representative of the people. In the following, I will turn to how this is played out in the two texts.

Representing 'the People'

Several critics of nationalist leaders' autobiographies have observed the tendency to read oneself as 'metonymic' of the nation.[58] Holden argues that the memoir of Singapore's prime minister Lee Kuan Yew 'map[s] the nation's story onto an individual's body, and draw[s] parallels between scripts of personal and collective awakening.'[59] A similar gesture is found in the memoirs of Nkomo and Smith who, as leaders of their respective political movements, portray themselves as credible representatives of the national community as well. In so doing, they invoke the support of the people. Here, I will look firstly at how Nkomo and Smith claim popular support, before I examine what collective communities the authors invoke and consider how they use the flexible imagination of a national community to situate their narratives in the present as well as to adjust collective narratives of the past.

Smith and Nkomo place themselves as the central actors of the story of popular political awakening and the ensuing political and military campaigns. Against the ZANU-PF framing as 'Father of Dissidents', a divisive tribal leader enjoying the support only of the Ndebele, Nkomo portrays himself 'as the originator of the liberation struggle and as a symbol of unity'.[60] It was not he, he argues, but ZANU-PF, who resorted to tribalism and sacrificed unity for the sake of power. When he describes the decision of an educated elite to break away from ZAPU to establish ZANU in 1963, he suggests that dissatisfaction was not homegrown: 'at home our people had never been more united.' Instead, 'divisions began to appear within our movement's organisation abroad. This problem of disunity has

[58] Boehmer, *Stories of Women*, 69; Chennells, 'Self-Representation and National Memory', 137.
[59] Holden, *Autobiography and Decolonization*, 5.
[60] Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 'Reinvoking the Past in the Present', 197.

persisted right up until today.'[61] Being still 'at home', we are made to understand that Nkomo was in touch with 'our people' while 'the students at universities abroad had lost contact with the realities of life at home' and 'chose to exploit "tribal" differences as a means of rallying […] loyalty.'[62] This dismisses the charge of tribalism and suggests that he had a better connection to the wishes of 'the people' than did the itinerant elite.

Even more emphatic in claiming the support of 'ordinary people', Smith continuously refers to the spontaneous outpouring of popular support for him and his politics. Countless times he narrates being approached by strangers who felt compelled to share with him their enduring admiration for his work and character and their disgust at the way he was treated by the world community.[63] In a curious double move, Smith thus manages to represent himself as a lone fighter unjustly ostracised by the political establishment across the world yet at the same time also as the representative of 'the people' and loved by ordinary folk wherever he goes. It is significant that it is 'ordinary people', the 'average black' and 'normal Rhodesians' who are said to support Smith. He represents himself as understanding the wishes of the majority as he says: 'The communists had already started their propaganda, but our average black was not interested. Traditionally, he was conservative and satisfied with the manner in which things were progressing.'[64] At least three times, he repeats almost verbatim hearing the comment that: '"In this country we see the happiest black faces we've ever seen."'[65] The problematic patronising connotations of referring to 'black faces' are entirely lost on a man who continuously refers to 'our blacks' and even (in 1997!) to 'negroes'.[66] Just like the generous compliments towards himself, this comment is rendered as other (if anonymized) people's

[61] Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, 109.
[62] Ibid., 113. On political uses of tribalism, see Ranger, 'The Invention of Ethnicity in Zimbabwe', 120; Mtisi, Nyakudya, and Barnes, 'War in Rhodesia, 1965-1980', 151; White, *Assassination of Herbert Chitepo*, 16.
[63] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 96, 132, 201, 266, 274, 327. See also Schwarz, *The White Man's World*, 422.
[64] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 25.
[65] Ibid., 107, 192, 409.
[66] And who refers matter-of-factly to seeing an African man who had only two large toes: 'This transformation was a phenomenon which had probably developed to assist in climbing trees in order to obtain food.' Ibid., 28, 107, 153.

observation. In this way, he provides evidence that the black population was not only satisfied but 'the happiest […] ever seen'. As Schwarz observes, while black people are claimed to have supported Smith, 'they themselves are accorded no agency, dependent on others to represent them.'[67]

Part of this claim of popular backing is the assumption that one speaks for the people. Smith describes a meeting in the lead-up to his proclamation of independence when

> I expressed the spirit of Rhodesians by quoting those tremendous words: 'All the soul of man is resolution, which in valiant men falters never, until their last breath.' I was told afterwards that this had brought tears to many eyes and lumps to many throats. Rhodesians did not flinch from the thought; they were ready for it.[68]

Smith claims insight into the thoughts and feelings of 'Rhodesians' as a whole, as he was able to express their spirit and touch them emotionally through his apt articulation of what they all felt. On the eve of another moment of independence, that of 1980, Nkomo describes delivering a speech with similar effect: 'I felt that the people were speaking with my voice: there was no difference between us: we were one.'[69] This idea of speaking with the voice of the people, while a cliché, is important for the way it allows the author to appropriate that central part of political action, the voice, from the people and suggest that everything the individuals who make up the national community might wish to express was contained in the words of, and conveyed more eloquently by, the memoirist.

As we look at the relationship between the individual and the collective in these professions of representativeness, it is relevant to consider who constitute the collective or 'the people' invoked by the authors. Here, we can observe a degree of elasticity in who terms like 'the people' or 'Rhodesians'/'Zimbabweans' are intended to refer to, sometimes perhaps

[67] Schwarz, *The White Man's World*, 422.
[68] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 91.
[69] Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, 205.

left intentionally vague. Through such variable interpellations, the authors narratively bring different communities into existence, revealing what cohort their democratic sentiments encompass as well as what readership they imagine they are sharing their stories with.

Nkomo and Smith both use 'our people' or 'the people' mainly to refer to their own racial group. However, they both profess to believe that people of all colours have a place in the national community – an apparent paradox which neither of them addresses. Most often, Nkomo uses 'the people' to refer to the black population: 'For more than half a century the people of Southern Rhodesia had been told, until they came to believe it, that they were of no account in the world. Their homeland, they said to each other and even to their children, was *Ilizwe laMakhiwa*, white man's country.'[70] Here, he quite openly equates 'the people' with the black population. In so doing, he seems to want to rectify the past situation in which that population was discursively as well as materially bereft of their country as they were 'told, until they came to believe it' that they lived in 'white man's country'. The equation of 'the people' with the black population can thus be read as an act of reclamation of the country. Yet in spite of this, Nkomo maintains that he envisions a future in which the 'settler population' will 'I hope, now play their full part as citizens of a new nation'.[71] Here he portrays himself as a symbol of national unity, including unity across the races.[72] This may be read as part of Nkomo's attempt to place himself as a credible political leader for the future. At a time when there were concerns about how the new rulers of Zimbabwe would manage race relations, Nkomo stresses to a national as well as an international audience that he will 'continue working' towards 'reconciliation' between 'all the country's interest groups'. The ZANU-PF government, by contrast, is accused of seeming 'to feel the need to exercise a partisan authority rather than to mobilise the national will.'[73]

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[70] Ibid., 91, italics in original.
[71] Ibid., xiii.
[72] Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Willems, 'Reinvoking the Past in the Present', 197.
[73] Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, 252.

While the main charge against Nkomo was that he was a tribal leader, Smith was accused of outright racism. Occasionally, when insisting upon the non-racist character of his rule, Smith suggests that his understanding of 'Rhodesians' is not racially exclusive: 'All Rhodesians, whatever their race, colour or creed, had equal access to the voters' roll.'[74] However, his use of 'Rhodesians' tends to betray a narrower definition of the national cohort. As Cuthbert Tagwirei notes, 'Smith makes a habit of differentiating between whites and blacks in his narrative, where whites are described as "we Rhodesians" […] and blacks as "our Africans" or "our blacks"'.[75] Even as he claims the support of the black population and insists that the nationalist 'extremists' were out of touch with the wishes of 'our average black', Smith tends to exclude that majority from his understanding of 'Rhodesians'.

Indeed, Smith reveals unambiguously that this is a racial category for him when he suggests that '[t]here is only one white tribe, the Rhodesians, who are indigenous to this country'.[76] Clearly unafraid of tribal language, Smith uses it to create a continuing space for 'Rhodesianness' in Zimbabwe in the present. But he also seeks to affect the narrative about the past by insisting that the white minority was not alien to the country and as such had both entitlement to, and understanding of, Africa. The claim to indigeneity is linked to himself when he argues that his election as prime minister

> was more than the normal change of one PM for another. The entire character of the scene had been altered. For the first time in its history the country now had a Rhodesian-born PM, someone whose roots were not in Britain, but in southern Africa, in other words, a white African. Unlike his predecessors who, when they talked about 'going back home', were thinking about Britain, his home was Rhodesia.[77]

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[74] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 82. Smith is stretching the truth here, as voting qualifications de facto excluded most blacks from access to the political process. Lemon, 'Electoral Machinery and Voting Patterns in Rhodesia, 1962-1977'.
[75] Tagwirei, 'The Simultaneity of Past and Present', 12. On the rhetorical use of such 'ouring', see Javangwe, 'Contesting Narratives', 72.
[76] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 327.
[77] Ibid., 67.

Smith assumes an almost messianic status as he speaks of himself in the third person and refers to his election as a complete sea change. Like Nkomo, he suggests that he had access to the desires of the people because of his presence in the country. While Nkomo uses this to challenge the ZANU intellectuals abroad, Smith argues that unlike the metropolitan politicians and 'starry-eyed do-gooders' meddling in Rhodesian affairs, he had his own country's interests at heart and understood the wishes of the people.[78] For Smith, then, discerning who counts as 'Rhodesian' is contingent on the demands of the narrative context: he expands it to include 'all races' when he is discussing race equality and narrows it to a 'white tribe' when referring to the survival of certain cultural values in Zimbabwe. Consistent, though, is Smith's insistence that he had the popular support of 'ordinary' and 'average' people, black and white, and that he had a peculiar understanding of the wishes of the people because of his indigeneity.

To sum up, Smith and Nkomo both use the moment of political awakening to portray themselves as drawn to violence under duress by deteriorating circumstances, as consistent in their own politics and as representatives of 'the people'. These are all convenient narrative devices in a political memoir. In the fraught context in which both of them have been rejected as enemies of 'the people' in official discourse, they can use these tropes to insist on the legitimacy of their cause and their personal integrity. As defeated nationalists writing after empire, they maintain alternative visions of what might be best for the country. However, as we will see in the following, they do not harbour the same kinds of hope of once again stepping into the centre of national politics.

Moments of Betrayal

The above discussion of the narrative construction of 'the people' can be directly linked to the notion of betrayal. In the introduction to a volume on *Traitors: Suspicion, Intimacy and the Ethics of State-Building*, Tobias Kelly and

[78] Ibid., 55.

Sharika Thiranagama suggest that '[a]ccusations of treachery […] are central to attempts to concretize the empty signifier of "the people."'[79] They argue that '[a]ll modern states are built on betrayal,' and elaborate: 'In a context where states depend on the multiple and often contradictory intimate relationships of kinship, ethnicity, and class to extend their reach, claims of treason help map the moral boundaries of the state and the people in whose name they speak.'[80] Thus, by establishing which loyalties trump others, accusations of betrayal can be used to shore up a community, promote a shared identity and define what acts and what people fall inside and outside of this community. In crisis-ridden Rhodesia after 1965, detention and withdrawal of citizenship was a common response to political opposition which was perceived as threatening the national unity and was classified as 'treason', and in Zimbabwe, every leader of the opposition since 1980 has been charged with treason.[81] Thus, accusations of betrayal police the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and establish who retains the power to judge others as traitors.

But at the same time, such allegations also reveal who are deemed to have an obligation to behave loyally. As we will see, downright enemies are not seen as traitors; only people whose loyalty one might hope for and indeed expect are thus labelled. When studying political memoirs, accusations of betrayal can help us understand the relationship between the individual and the collective as they interpellate a certain collective as accountable to shared loyalties. At the same time, these charges have a positioning function as the authors use them to claim a moral high ground as well as to counter similar charges of treason against themselves. As such, they speak to the dialogic element of the political memoir as charges and counter-charges reverberate between the public sphere of collective narratives and the individual contribution in the shape of the memoir.

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[79] Kelly and Thiranagama, 'Specters of Treason', 8.
[80] Ibid., 3.
[81] I thank Professor Jocelyn Alexander for the latter insight. On opposition as treason, see also Cheeseman and Tendi, 'Power-Sharing in Comparative Perspective', 215. Most recently, discussing potential successors to the 92-year-old president has been called 'treasonous'. *The Herald*, 'Likens Succession Talk to Treason'.

In Nkomo and Smith's memoirs, it is clear that betrayal is a central concern, both when the authors map the Rhodesian/Zimbabwean political landscape, and when they fend off accusations of treason or charge others with betrayal. Here, I will argue that accusations of betrayal are used partly to counter accusations against oneself as having betrayed someone or something, partly to map whose loyalty one would have assumed, thereby revealing who are included in an imagined community, and partly, as above, to mark oneself as consistent and as winning the moral victory despite losing the political battle.

Smith: More Sinned Against than Sinning

The authors' understanding of the 'in-group' to which they belong can to a certain extent be gauged from whom they direct accusations of betrayal against. When Smith talks of betrayal, he never refers to black people, but rather invokes a settler imperial or Anglo-world sense of 'kith and kin'.[82] As Douglas Cole has argued for late nineteenth and early twentieth century Australia, notions of community were contingent on the perceived level of crisis, so that people might claim Australian, British or white identity, with their claim expanding according to the level of exigency.[83] Similarly, Smith casts the net wider and wider in search of fellow passengers in his struggle, appealing first to ideas of the shared Britishness of Rhodesians and Britons, then to the white Southern African identity of Rhodesians and South Africans, and then to 'Western Christian values' that allow him to demand support from the wider Anglo-world including the USA. While Smith assumes the loyalty of the majority of Rhodesia's black population, he never frames their turn to nationalism as betrayal, but rather as the result of brainwashing or intimidation.[84]

In his review of *The Great Betrayal*, Samuel Makinda calls the title 'something of a misnomer, since Smith has chosen to write not about one

[82] For the term 'Anglo-world', see Belich, *Replenishing the Earth*.
[83] Cole, '"The Crimson Thread of Kinship"'.
[84] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 35, 68, 153.

but several "great betrayals."'[85] Indeed, Smith does detect betrayal and treason lurking around every corner. The language of betrayal is employed to mark out behaviour which he finds unacceptable in people he feels ought to have sided with him. As such, no political disagreement with him is legitimate in Smith's exposition. As we have seen, the nationalists are cast as 'communists' and 'terrorists', terms which bring them outside the realm of negotiation but also of betrayal. Their ideology deemed inherently 'evil', there is no shared community whose loyalty they can betray.[86] But all the (white) people whom Smith feels ought to have supported him and who deign to disagree with him are labelled as traitors. As Kelly and Thiranagama argue, 'traitors arguably attract a particular aversion because they are not a distant "other" but the enemy within. They are a source of internal transgression, and as such, they call into question the moral and political commitments of those who seem to be closest to us.'[87]

While one might assume treason to imply legal transgression, Smith demonstrates how it may be understood in moral terms, too.[88] He describes the 1964 vote on a bill he supported which requested Britain to confirm that they would not interfere in Southern Rhodesian affairs. When part of the opposition voted against the bill, it was, he says, a case of 'white liberals climbing on the bandwagon of black nationalist movements, hoping to gain favours in return. It was bad enough having to cope with this kind of behaviour from the British, but coming from our own Rhodesians, this was blatant treason.'[89] Similarly, the British Conservatives' support of sanctions against Rhodesia 'was indefensible, if not downright treacherous.'[90] When one of his fellow Rhodesian delegates at the peace negotiations voted for a decision Smith had opposed, 'I recalled Cicero's famous words: "A nation can survive its fools and even the ambitious. But it cannot survive treason from within."'[91] By labelling the exercise of other people's democratic right

[85] Makinda, 'Review', 167.
[86] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 235.
[87] Kelly and Thiranagama, 'Specters of Treason', 2.
[88] Ibid., 16.
[89] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 62.
[90] Ibid., 110.
[91] Ibid., 320.

to disagree as 'treason', Smith makes clear his moral and supra-legal interpretation of the word. People may be constitutionally entitled to disagree with him, but this right is secondary to the obligation to making the morally correct choice, one which is always closely identified with Smith's own position. Smith conflates disagreement with him with treason against the nation and takes personal offence when he believes people let down Rhodesia, so that he becomes the embodiment of Rhodesia. In the end, Smith is always right and there is no valid political opposition, only misguided, evil, devious or treacherous behaviour. He builds a fortress of his own politics which occupies the moral high ground whereas all opposition is cast outside in the realm of dubious morals and with no chance of rocking the stable, immovable (some would say stubborn) fortification: try as they might, no one is going to force Smith to abandon his principles. We may interpret this as a strategy of authentication chosen to persuade his readers. If Smith has always been right, if all opposition against him has constituted betrayal, how could he be wrong about the way he narrates the past? Would not any other way of narrating that past constitute a similar betrayal?

But haunting Smith's text is the accusation that he might himself be the traitor rather than the betrayed. As a Unilateral Declaration of Independence, his 1965 proclamation was unconstitutional and provoked sanctions from Britain and the world community.[92] In general, Smith does not make explicit the charges made against the UDI as 'illegal' and tends to avoid using 'unconstitutional'. He says that the British Prime Minister Wilson was 'making extravagant statements' after UDI, but does not cite them, nor does he cite the UN resolution which condemned the UDI and called upon states 'not to recognize this illegal racist minority régime'.[93] While not voicing the specific allegations against him, Smith maintains that 'our consciences were clear […] My stand had always been straightforward and consistent: we came to an agreement with the British government at the Victoria Falls conference, they repudiated the contract, we were asserting

[92] Good, *U.D.I,* 15–28.
[93] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 109; UN 'Resolution 216'.

our right to implement the contract.'[94] Thus, he insists that there was nothing unconstitutional about their UDI as they were only bringing into effect a constitution which the British had agreed to and subsequently failed to honour. Once again stressing his own consistency in contrast to British deception and vacillation, he redirects the accusation of treason back against the British. As Kelly and Thiranagama suggest: 'The attribution of treason is always first and foremost an *interpretive* act.'[95] They point to other historical cases in which the making of new states was founded on treason, such as the American declaration of independence, and note how 'these betrayals of the old regime continue to haunt their successors, serving as a constant reminder of the fragility of power. Accusations of treason have, therefore, historically played a central role in the attempt to maintain social order and political authority.'[96] If applied to Smith, we can see how the perceived need to dispel a narrative of himself as a traitor lies at the root of the preoccupation with betrayal in his narrative as well as of his reiteration of his loyalty to British values. While he refers very little to the charge of unconstitutional action, the silencing of that commonly made accusation suggests that he is suppressing it because of the dangerous challenge it poses to his self-image as governed by a high-principled Britishness.

Nkomo: Securing a Place for the Future

In Nkomo's narrative, it is the unity of the nationalist movement which has been betrayed which by extension becomes a betrayal of the nation as a whole. The language of betrayal is not nearly as prominent in Nkomo's memoir as in Smith's, but when he does use it, it is to refer to ZANU or Mugabe. After ZANU broke away from ZAPU in 1963, he says, '[a]mong my own supporters there was real anger at the Zanu leadership's betrayal of national solidarity.'[97] While he places the anger with his supporters, he does not contradict the view that the breakaway amounted to betrayal not just of

[94] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 102.
[95] Kelly and Thiranagama, 'Specters of Treason', 5, italics in original.
[96] Ibid., 3.
[97] Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, 117.

his party but of the people. Just as Smith never refers to black people as traitors, Nkomo never couches the actions of the white Rhodesian government against him in terms of betrayal, signalling that these people were not bound by the same obligation to 'national solidarity' and in effect did not belong to the same community. Thus, while accusations against ZANU for betraying the national(ist) cause serve to challenge the legitimacy of ZANU-PF in the present, they also place that party within the realm where loyalty could be expected even as they transgressed against it.

The strongest moment of betrayal occurs immediately after the signing of the Lancaster House agreement on cease-fire and independence. This agreement had been negotiated with ZANU and ZAPU acting together under the party name of the Patriotic Front. 'Despite our long-standing difficulties,' Nkomo suggests they had 'established a working relationship and a degree of mutual confidence, at least at the top level.'[98] This budding sense of trust was put to the test as 'Robert Mugabe and I had agreed to meet and discuss the procedure for the elections that were due in three months' time.'[99] He sets up the occasion for the meeting rather grandly: 'Next morning the task of building the nation was to begin.'[100] Repeating 'our agenda' to 'fight [the elections] as a single party', Nkomo stresses that he came to Mugabe's door '[a]s agreed'.[101] We are left in no doubt that the two leaders had made an agreement and that keeping it had implications for the process of national reconstruction. However:

> Nobody answered: the place was empty. […]
>
> 'Where is Mr Mugabe?' I asked.
>
> 'Oh, he left this morning for Dar es Salaam,' came the reply.
>
> That was the end of our agreement to talk, broken not by me but by Robert Mugabe and the leadership of Zanu. Next morning I heard on the radio that Robert, on arrival in Dar, had announced that he and Zanu would be fighting the elections on their own. The smiles

[98] Ibid., 200.
[99] Ibid., 199–200.
[100] Ibid., 199.
[101] Ibid., 200.

> of Lancaster House were left behind in London. The national campaign of reconciliation that I dreamed of remained a dream. I, and the fighters and followers of Zapu, had been deceived.[102]

While Nkomo does not refer to Mugabe's actions as 'betrayal', it seems clear that this is what he implies in talking about deception and the broken agreement. As we have seen before, the personal and the national become linked, as the 'task of building a nation' and the 'national campaign of reconciliation' are brought to an end by Mugabe's failure to meet Nkomo. But in spite of this national focus and in spite of how he has stressed that the idea of fighting the elections together had the backing of 'many others in the leaderships of both the Zapu and Zanu wings of the PF',[103] a narrower understanding of the community is revealed at the moment of betrayal: 'I, and the fighters and followers of Zapu, had been deceived.' There is, then, a slippage between the personal, the party and the national.

The assertion 'not by me' suggests that Nkomo is providing evidence against a dominant narrative, as we have seen above, in which it was he who deserted the project of national unity. Later, he returns to the accusations of treason in a more explicit way when he describes his time in government. In 1980-82 he was Minister of Home Affairs under Mugabe's leadership, but vocal in his opposition to the way the government was led by the ZANU central committee. 'But,' he insists, 'I stayed strictly within the limits of a free democracy'. Yet in spite of having 'utterly rejected' 'a retreat into illegal opposition […] I was to be accused of exactly the conduct that I had done so much to avoid.'[104] His insistence on remaining within the rule of law must be read in the context of the 'ridiculous' charges that he was planning a plot to overthrow the state as well as of the accusations against him of spurring on 'dissidents' who were killing people in the Matabeleland region in the early 1980s.[105] In the face of these charges, Nkomo stresses his willingness to

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[102] Ibid.
[103] Hlongwana, Maposa, and Moyo, 'Sithole, Nkomo, Muzorewa, and the Birth of Zimbabwe', 200.
[104] Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, 223.
[105] Ibid., 224.

cooperate with the government rather than trying to undermine it. As he says at the outset of the narrative when listing the crimes against himself and his followers, 'the ruling party could not provoke me to disloyalty towards the nation I had struggled to liberate.'[106] Arguably, he uses his memoir to perform the kind of legal, non-violent opposition which he encourages. While presenting strong criticism of the government, he also presents himself as a potential future partner for the government, who acknowledges Mugabe's leadership, advocates dialogue and calls on people to be patient and observe 'constitutional procedures' when voicing criticism of the government.[107] These moves serve to dismantle the government narrative of Nkomo as 'the father of the dissidents' as well as to open up for future collaboration between himself and Mugabe.[108]

While he is keen to deflect the charges against himself as betraying the national unity and points out the deception of Mugabe and his party, Nkomo does not refer to treason and betrayal with the same obsessiveness as Smith. One possible interpretation of this, apart from the way their respective personalities influence Nkomo and Smith's accounts, is the way in which the two politicians envision their future. Smith comments at one point that he does not expect to be alive in five years time, and the visions he has for Zimbabwe's future are dealt with in one page.[109] Nkomo, on the other hand, is clearly positioning himself as a potential participant in Zimbabwean politics in the future. Not only does he devote an entire chapter to his ideas about what should be done to bring prosperity and justice to the country, he also says that he will continue working towards his goal of national reconciliation.[110] So while Smith's text can be seen largely as one of settling scores and having the last word, Nkomo's text also serves to place himself as a future political partner. In that context, repeated accusations of betrayal against Mugabe might prove counterproductive. Hence the balancing act between strong criticism and a conciliatory rhetoric. An additional effect of

[106] Ibid., 1.
[107] Ibid., 244–47.
[108] Ibid., 230.
[109] Smith, *The Great Betrayal*, 406, 411–12.
[110] Nkomo, *Nkomo: The Story of My Life*, 245–52.

this is to show a national and international audience that he does indeed mean what he says about reconciliation, that he does not intend to increase the hostility between the two parties but to find a common ground.

Strategic Betrayals

From the above discussion, we can see that the national preoccupation with treason in Rhodesia and Zimbabwe is reflected on the personal level of the political memoir. Charges of betrayal are used not only to constitute a community in terms of who have remained loyal to certain ideals, but also in terms of who *ought* to have remained loyal. In Smith's narrative, an ever-expanding number of Western countries are accused of having abandoned him and Rhodesia. And Nkomo focuses on the way in which Mugabe and ZANU have failed to maintain national(ist) unity by not meeting with him.

At the same time, discussions of betrayal are used strategically to counter narratives of one's own treason and to demonstrate the consistency of one's personal political stance. As we have seen above, an important function of political memoirs is to refute publicly circulated accounts of the politicians' role in the past. The strategic engagement with betrayal includes, for Nkomo's part, refraining from couching his criticism in terms of betrayal as part of an effort to emphasise his willingness to cooperate peacefully. For Smith, there is also the silencing of what could very well be charges against him for treason. Nkomo explicates such accusations only to refute them.

Both authors use the rhetoric of broken promises to claim the moral victory after having lost the political battle. They place on record their own contributions to bring freedom to their country and how others have destroyed what they worked for. As Kelly and Thiranagama point out, what counts as treason is 'not given once and for all but created by history, as new frames of interpretation are opened up'.[111] They argue here for the importance of the narrative context for understanding claims about betrayal. In these two political memoirs, we find attempts to rectify narratives of who were the traitors and the betrayed at the end of empire in

[111] Kelly and Thiranagama, 'Specters of Treason', 21.

Rhodesia/Zimbabwe. While their accounts are 'framed by wider historical narratives',[112] they do not accept the dominant story, whether it be the British narrative of UDI as racist and unconstitutional or the ZANU account of Nkomo as treasonous. Instead, they use those frames to provide different interpretations of the national past and their own place in it.

Conclusion: Compromised Freedoms

While the moment Smith identifies as independence falls 15 years before the one that Nkomo celebrates, both politicians share a sense that freedom has ultimately failed to materialise because of the failings of others. As nationalist politicians (albeit from two different parties with different political agendas and different understandings of the nation), neither of them follows the trajectory of the typical nationalist leader of independence, as traced by Boehmer and Holden. Boehmer says that most of the texts she studies 'almost necessarily conclude with that moment of independence, or with its strong anticipation. The implication is clear: the leader's vocation is fully realised when the new nation is born.'[113] Written on the eve of independence, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (1957) is such a celebration piece which narrates the story of the individual and national journey towards political freedom from a vantage point when freedom is uncompromised.[114] But Nkomo and Smith cannot write their story to fit that narrative template. Their memoirs do not end with the successful liberation of their country from foreign oppressors, but rather with the blunders of their own countrymen in maintaining the freedom they had claimed. In that sense, their story is more akin to Nkrumah's second memoir, *Dark Days in Ghana* (1968), written two years after he was overthrown. Strikingly, within the first page of this second memoir, Nkrumah refers to the 'traitors' who have taken over the country, 'cowards' who 'knew they did not have the

[112] Ibid., 20.
[113] Boehmer, *Stories of Women*, 69.
[114] The title suggests the conflation of the individual and the national. Nkrumah, *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*.

support of the people of Ghana'.[115] Perhaps, then, we can identify a sub-genre of the nationalist leader's political memoir, namely that of the defeated leader, characterised by counter-narrative efforts to insist upon the author's political and moral legitimacy as the representative of 'the people'.

Smith and Nkomo's memoirs share a number of similarities in terms of how they negotiate the relationship between themselves and 'the people' and between master narratives and their own stories. In both texts, the context of writing is used to justify the memoir as a counter-narrative. And in both texts, the moment of political awakening is used to bring together the individual and the collective with the protagonist acting as a catalyst for a popular realisation that enough is enough. In the invocation of 'the people', we see how elastic the leader's imagination of that group is, fitting the narrative purposes of the present. There is a tension in Nkomo and Smith's texts between wanting to claim representativeness and yet facing the challenge that ultimately they did not represent 'the people'. Despite their professions to truly understanding what 'the people' want, they are writing in a reality in which they do not hold power, even if they challenge how democratic were the elections that put them out of power. Yet by stressing their popular support, the authors seek to re-establish their legitimacy as national leaders. As part of this effort, both authors counter accusations of betrayal by insisting on their personal consistency and loyalty and through counter-accusations of their political opponents' treacherous behaviour. Like claims for support, the language of betrayal is also used to delimit a community, in this case the realm of anticipated loyalties. All of this bears evidence to the dialogical process between the political memoirist and the broader narrative context, shaped by historical processes which have not been favourable to them and within which they attempt to carve out a space for themselves; either, as Nkomo, in the future of the country, or, as Smith, within a small narrative community of white Zimbabweans who still identify as belonging to the 'Rhodesian tribe' and their sympathisers abroad.

By writing of compromised freedom, the authors provide counter-

[115] Nkrumah, *Dark Days in Ghana*, 9.

narratives both to the story of successful decolonisation expounded by the ruling party and to the template of nationalist political memoir as described by Boehmer and Holden. Like those leaders, Nkomo and Smith read themselves as metonymic of the wider collective. However, while the successful politician may use his/her personal account to corroborate an already sanctioned cultural memory of the past, the marginalised politician must provide a counter-narrative strong enough to challenge the master narrative. Through their personal accounts and their claims to legitimately representating the nation, Nkomo and Smith seek to affect collective memories of their role in the past – memories that will also influence how the collective envisions their place in the national political realm in the future.

6
The Family Connection: Expatriate Family Memoirs of Zimbabwe

In his 2006 memoir, white expatriate Zimbabwean Peter Godwin describes watching a propaganda video about the recent evictions of white farmers. The video represents the land reforms as 'war' against 'little Englanders'. His father, who lost his family in the Holocaust, turns off the television and says: "'Being a white here is starting to feel a bit like being a Jew in Poland in 1939 – an endangered minority – the target of ethnic cleansing.'"[1] In the memoir he published ten years previously, Godwin seemed concerned to come across as a liberal supporter of multi-ethnic Zimbabwe. Now, he makes extravagant comparisons between the Holocaust and the land reforms. But, of course, it is not Godwin, but his father who makes the comparison. Writing from the US, Godwin and his contemporary Alexandra Fuller use their family connection to claim continued belonging in Africa and to invite empathy for white Zimbabweans as victims rather than oppressors.

In former colonies as well as the metropole, decolonisation entailed a retelling of the colonial past and provided a new language in which to conceive of racial relations. Yet discursive shifts are never final. In recent years in particular, the triumphalism of independence has been followed by a backlash against the celebration of decolonisation. As Paul Gilroy has argued, this links up with anxieties surrounding multi-cultural society. The failure of African leaders to deliver prosperity and human rights has acted in conjunction with a racially inflected sympathy for whites abroad to question the benevolence of majority rule and to ameliorate the negative postcolonial image of whites in Africa. Crystallising around the violent evictions of white farmers in Zimbabwe after 2000, Gilroy detects anxiety 'over the fate of

[1] Godwin, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 176.

Britain's abandoned colonial kith and kin'. He describes the 'repetition of tragic southern African themes' which 'convey the catastrophic consequences of intermixture and the severe problems that arise once colonial order has been withdrawn or sacrificed'. Important to this tendency, he argues, is how such themes are 'deployed to contest and then seize the position of victim.'[2] While the focus of Gilroy's analysis is postcolonial melancholia in Britain, the move to take 'possession of [the] coveted role' of the victim can also be traced in autobiographical works by white Zimbabweans after the fast-track land reforms of the early 2000s.

As part of the reforms, 4,000 out of 4,500 white families were forced off their land over the course of two years, while Robert Mugabe's government promoted a 'reworked narrative of nationalism, [in which] veterans were cast as the heroic liberators of the land from whites seen as unreconstructed racists' and 'enemies'.[3] The land reforms and the hostile rhetoric that accompanied them had a two-pronged effect: on the one hand, they created a negative state-sponsored narrative in Zimbabwe about whites which cast them as aliens and enemies of the state, and on the other, they created a sympathetic audience, in particular in the West, for narratives about the plight of whites.[4] Among white Zimbabweans, there was 'a resuscitation [after 2000] of discourses prevalent in the 1970s, which had disappeared from public expression in the 1980s and 1990s.'[5] According to Rory Pilossof, victimhood is important to these post-2000 white narratives. Thus, as we saw in the case of Smith's memoir, the existence of a white narrative community is related to a sense of whiteness under siege. Mugabe's emphasis on an inherent conflict between whites and blacks has had the unintended effect of creating sympathy for whites in Africa. Ashleigh Harris argues that it 'gave white Zimbabweans the rhetorical stage for their claim to victimhood, which in turn became an expedient site for the erasure of colonial history.'[6] She and other critics have detected an

[2] Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*, 105.
[3] Alexander, *The Unsettled Land*, 185–86; Hughes, *Whiteness in Zimbabwe*, xi.
[4] Harris, 'Facing/Defacing Robert Mugabe'; Pilossof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, 119.
[5] Pilossof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, 9, 118–19.
[6] Harris, 'Facing/Defacing Robert Mugabe', 111.

outpouring of white Zimbabwean memoirs and how they speak into a new agenda of white victimhood after 2000.[7]

The two most famous exponents of that genre in recent years are Alexandra Fuller and Peter Godwin, both professional writers now living in the West but who continue to write about their Zimbabwean background. Both authors have written several memoirs, of which this chapter will treat four: Godwin's *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa* (1996) and *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun: A Memoir of Africa* (2006) and Fuller's *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight: An African Childhood* (2002) and *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness* (2011). As is clear from the subtitles of several of these texts, they stress the authors' attachments to Africa rather than their contemporary lives in England and America.[8] To secure those attachments, Godwin and Fuller write about their families, in particular their parents who remain resident in Zimbabwe and Zambia respectively. Thus, more so than Gilroy's metropolitans, the 'kith and kin' they invoke is of an intimate kind. By extension, their anxieties about the fate of whites in Africa are immediate, just as their liberal moral scruples about the colonial past have a disturbingly familiar face. This chapter examines the telling of individual memories through a family connection and considers how the authors engage with moral issues surrounding the role of whites in Africa as well as their own claim to belonging through that connection.

Family is important to memory. On the one hand, the family is one of the social groupings within which memory work is carried out as family members bolster their community through shared memories. But on the other, in memoirs like these, it can function as a trope in itself which endows the authors' memories of the national past with an authority which is difficult to question. While we saw in the previous chapter an emphasis on

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[7] Harris, 'Writing Home'; Pilossof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*; Primorac, 'Rhodesians Never Die?'

[8] As Pilossof notes, '"Africa" sells. Westerners can relate to and identify "Africa", not necessarily Zimbabwe, Malawi, Chad or any other remote "African" country of indistinct blackness.' Pilossof, 'Land, Race and Belonging in the Memoirs of White Zimbabweans', 632. My discussion will address how Fuller and Godwin claim African belonging as this is often used as a catch-all, especially by Fuller whose parents have lived in a number of African countries.

the relationship between the protagonist and 'the people', in this instance, legitimacy and empathy are sought through the relationship to parents and siblings in Zimbabwe. It is this intimate community which is used to persuade the reader that the author may speak authoritatively on Zimbabwean issues and that, for all the criticism that can be raised against them, whites in Africa are fundamentally good people.

Fuller and Godwin's fame has not only granted them large audiences in the West, but has also instantiated a surge in academic analysis often with a decidedly critical slant. Pilossof, Harris and Muchativugwa Liberty Hove argue that Fuller and Godwin's criticism of the present state of affairs in Zimbabwe is dehistoricised, lacking any deeper reflection or interrogation of the authors' own role in white rule.[9] It is thus their role as memory texts and what is suspected to be their wilful forgetting which have occasioned much of the criticism against them. Ranka Primorac and Anthony Chennells take a somewhat gentler view, but they, too, uncover the remnants of a 'neo-Rhodesian discourse' in the texts.[10] Fuller and Godwin respond to the increasingly hostile rhetoric about whites from Mugabe's government and the narrative of white victimhood this gave rise to in the West – a response which is inflected by being authored overseas.

While they locate the audience of these texts abroad, Pilossof, Harris, Chennells, Hove and Primorac do not consider the implications of the expatriate position of Fuller and Godwin in detail.[11] Yet for texts that seek to stake out claims of belonging in a country, it is surely crucial that they have been written from abroad. Even more significantly, while noting the prominence of the family and of childhood memories, these critics do not provide in-depth analyses of the role of the family in these memoirs.[12] I will argue that Fuller and Godwin use the family connection to negotiate a space for themselves in spite of the triple exclusion offered by postcolonial

[9] Harris, 'Writing Home'; Hove, 'Imagining the Nation'; Pilossof, 'Land, Race and Belonging in the Memoirs of White Zimbabweans'.
[10] Chennells, 'Self-Representation and National Memory'; Primorac, 'Rhodesians Never Die?', 204.
[11] Harris, 'Writing Home', 112; Pilossof, 'Land, Race and Belonging in the Memoirs of White Zimbabweans', 622–23.
[12] Harris, 'Writing Home', 108–10; Primorac, 'Rhodesians Never Die?', 210.

discourse, government hostility and expatriate position. In addition, they employ nostalgic stories of their childhoods and tragic accounts of losing siblings and of decaying sites of family memory strategically to tackle the difficult moral position of liberal endorsement of whites in Africa.

The narratives are widely different from, say, Australian memoirs in that the questioning of the authors' right to belong and to speak as national citizens is at the base of their narrative, so that their texts become counter-claims to their sense of exclusion. They are haunted by two overriding dilemmas: how, as white liberals, to negotiate their place within the moral make-up of whites in Africa and their own place within a victim-perpetrator scheme – and how, as white expatriates after decolonisation, in the face of government condemnation to speak on African issues with any authority and legitimacy. It is through the family and the nostalgic and tragic modes that the authors manage these dilemmas, and their representations cluster around tropes such as home, the death of intimate others and the desecration of memorial sites.

Negotiating the Context of Writing

With Godwin born in 1957 and Fuller in 1969, they are by far the youngest writers in this study. This means that they have been too young to experience the era of global imperialism or the high water mark of decolonisation. Instead, they have grown up in a country which was internationally regarded as anachronistic in its white supremacist rule and have experienced its demise during their formative years. Their memoirs reflect the unravelling of that system and the new African government that took over. Because they have written several iterations of memoirs, it is possible to trace developments in how they grapple with the past in light of the present.[13] Through their family connection, the authors engage with national politics and with the position of writing from overseas. In spite of differences depending on the author and the time of writing, their families

[13] Compare Whitlock's examination of the multiple Afterwords to Doris Lessing's *Going Home*, influenced by the shifting historical circumstances. Whitlock, *Intimate Empire*, 194.

are consistently called upon to elucidate the authors' attitudes and their sense of belonging.

The fact that Fuller and Godwin implicitly self-identify as liberals adds a layer of complexity to their works. Whereas much of the new autobiographical literature from Zimbabwe is by people who are fairly unapologetic about the unequal race relations of the colonial era,[14] Fuller and Godwin seek to distance themselves from racism and point out the negative aspects of European settlement. The authors represent themselves as supporters of freedom and equality and the absence of corruption. From this position, which as a shorthand I will call 'liberal', they criticise both Ian Smith's and Robert Mugabe's regimes.

In his history of the Rhodesian left, Ian Hancock tries to explain why it failed. He argues that the left rejected 'both undiluted White supremacy and African majority rule. The substitute – the non-racial meritocracy – was so hedged with qualifications and so ill-defined that Africans could legitimately question the left's sincerity.'[15] Thus, white liberals in Rhodesia have been accused of carrying out their politics within a system of white supremacy rather than offering a radical alternative. Godwin and Fuller leave their readers in no doubt that they resent Ian Smith and racism, yet like the Rhodesian liberals a generation before them, they are in the difficult position of identifying with the people they criticise.[16] In very different ways, they use their parents to elucidate their own political vantage point.

Life writing critic Thomas Couser has suggested using the term 'filial narrative' to describe texts which take the author's parent as a central protagonist. He distinguishes between writing that affiliates and writing that disaffiliates, that is, between justificatory and accusatory texts.[17] In Fuller's texts, her parents function as exemplars of everyday racism from which the

[14] For example many of the authors studied by Pilossof: Richard Wiles' *Foredoomed is my Forest* (2005), Eric Harrison's *Jambanja* (2006), Jim Barker's *Paradise Plundered* (2007) and Ann Rothrock Beattie's *Tengwe Garden Club* (2008). See Pilossof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, chapter 5.
[15] Hancock, *White Liberals, Moderates and Radicals in Rhodesia 1953-1980*, 6–7. On the 'hollow' position of 'self-professed liberals', see also Kennedy, 'An Education in Empire', 101.
[16] Hancock, *White Liberals, Moderates and Radicals in Rhodesia 1953-1980*, 215.
[17] Mansfield, 'Fashioning Fathers', 15.

narrator can distance herself, whereas in Godwin's texts, his parents provide him with liberal credentials through their longstanding commitment to racial equality and freedom. In a politically fraught context like the Zimbabwean, the family narrative becomes a realm for political positioning. While they distance themselves from white supremacy, both authors also seek to soften the image of individual white Rhodesians by suggesting that they did not fully comprehend the scale of oppression.

Godwin uses his parents mainly to stress his own liberal record, affiliating himself with their opinions and their work to promote a liberal agenda. He refers to his parents as 'part of the old white liberal establishment',[18] and says they 'didn't support Smith and his Rhodesian Front Party, unlike most whites.'[19] This opposition between his parents and 'most whites' is important as it suggests that their politics was not simply convenient but a principled choice. Indeed, he implies that the majority of whites were mindlessly following Smith: 'My father had just joined a new political party that was trying to reform the constitution, but most whites were still in the thrall of the prime minister, Ian Smith.'[20] In *Mukiwa*, the focus of family resistance is white supremacy which his parents are shown to oppose through party work, while Godwin's younger self is quoted opposing racist jokes and making black friends.[21] At one point, Godwin even, astonishingly, describes how he had once fantasised about killing Ian Smith himself. When he was in the police, he was tasked with guarding the Prime Minister: 'So this was the man – good ol' Smithy – followed blindly by white Rhodesians even though he had no bloody idea where to lead us. This was our icon. Then, completely unbidden, the thought popped into my mind that I could easily shoot him.' He caught Smith's tired eyes, 'They seemed to be begging me to go ahead and do it, to give him an honourable way out of this fiasco.'[22] Of course, this incredible situation cannot be confirmed, but it does seem to suggest a certain authorial need to place oneself at key

[18] Godwin, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 58.
[19] Godwin, *Mukiwa*, 208.
[20] Ibid., 197.
[21] Ibid., 190–95.
[22] Ibid., 263.

junctures in the country's history. Even though he says he was interrupted in his reverie, the very idea of shooting the most iconic leader of white supremacy makes him an agent rather than an impotent observer of history.[23]

In Godwin's second memoir, his family's involvement against a repressive regime becomes even more active and central to the narrative. Meanwhile, the focus has shifted to Mugabe as the quintessential repressor. Thus, we hear about his sister's efforts to continue broadcasting a radio show free of government propaganda and censorship, forcing her to move to London to avoid repercussions.[24] This mirrors the author's own work as a journalist to cover the land seizures which places him in dangerous situations and makes him unwelcome in Zimbabwe.[25] His parents, too, while old and frail, insist on exercising their democratic rights. During an election, the father is 'exhausted' by waiting for hours in the sun, yet he stubbornly remains to cast his vote: 'He can barely catch his breath, but he is triumphant.'[26] His mother makes a similar principled stand at personal risk as she tries 'to roll back corruption, in a small way, by serving on a medical compensation board, reviewing claims from former guerrillas disabled in the independence war.' Here, she contests false claims made by 'party fat cats' and is threatened with violence in return.[27] These individual contributions to keeping Zimbabwe democratic are clearly a source of family pride.[28] In *When a Crocodile*, the Godwins as a family unit are represented as a small block of incorruptible resistance, each contributing in their own small way, and with significant personal sacrifice, to upholding principles of democracy in the face of corruption, propaganda and violence.

Fuller, on the other hand, uses her parents, in particular her mother, to disaffiliate herself from racist discourse. She frequently cites their use of

[23] Godwin also places his childhood self as one of the first at the scene of the crime of the murder of Piet Oberholzer which has come to be interpreted as the first armed attack of the guerrilla movement. Ibid., 8–14; Ward, 'Uncommon Law'.
[24] Godwin, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 101, 121, 233.
[25] Ibid., 72, 85, 96.
[26] Ibid., 100.
[27] Ibid., 52–53.
[28] Ibid., 216.

racist slurs like 'kaffir', '*muntus*' and 'Affies'.[29] While Godwin seems keen to stress the harmonious relationship between himself and the black workers and children around his childhood home and describes learning vernacular expressions, Fuller exposes her own childhood racism.[30] She recalls how she would play 'boss and boys' with the black children, '(picanins, I call them)', and threaten to fire the servants if they were strict with her.[31] The parenthesis suggests, as many other instances in her narrative, that she is now critical towards the language of white Rhodesians.[32] She quotes her eight-year-old self, '"When I grow up, I'll be in charge of *muntus* and show them how to farm properly," I declare.'[33]

Even though Fuller speaks openly about her own participation in such racist attitudes, she locates responsibility for this racism with her upbringing, as in her many references to her mother's injunctions against behaviour which was associated with black Africans. Thus, mixing tea and bread in your mouth or 'dancing hip-waggling to African music' was not allowed because, as her mother would say, '"it is something only *muntus* do."'[34] Indeed, in Fuller's adult interpretation, these things that she might like to do as a child were prohibited simply to signal a difference between whites and blacks. She explains that walking on the road rather than driving was 'counted among the things white people do not do to distinguish themselves from black people'.[35] By linking her own past racism to her mother's racist language and the way she had seen from her parents that whites should boss blacks around, Fuller relinquishes any deep, personal responsibility for what could only be a learnt response.

As an adult, she is keen to stress that she no longer buys into a racist mind-set which she associates with the colonial past. In her second memoir, Fuller uses the dialogical form to communicate the distance between herself

[29] Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, 52, 65, 125, 159, italics in original.
[30] Godwin, *Mukiwa*, 33–36, 119, 124–28, 189–95.
[31] Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, 42; 140.
[32] Ibid., 25. In contrast, Godwin still uses '*piccanins*' for children and 'boys' for grown workers with little self-awareness. Godwin, *Mukiwa*, 250, italics in original.
[33] Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, 105, italics in original.
[34] Ibid., 42, 142, italics in original.
[35] Ibid., 102.

and her parents' politics. When describing the colonisation history of Kenya, where her mother grew up, the narrator is interrupted by the mother's voice: '"No," Mum says impatiently. "No, no, no, you've got it all wrong. Eldoret was not taken over from anyone. There hadn't been anyone living on it before the white man came. It was too bleak and windy for the natives."'[36] While the mother is allowed a space to protest, this does not mean that Fuller's narrator accepts her version of the past. It is used, instead, to show how convinced her mother is of the innocence of white settlement. This interjected dialogue between the narrator and her mother allows Fuller an opportunity to stress the divergences in understandings of the colonial past, placing herself firmly in opposition to the stereotypical white African defence of their colonial legacy. Fuller points out the differences between herself and her mother, taking their respective pronunciations of 'Kenya' as emblematic of their colonial and post-colonial interpretations:

> Mum pronounces the name of the country with a long colonial-era *e* – Keen-ya (/ki nja/), as if Britain still stains more than a quarter of the globe pink with its dominion. I, however, pronounce it with a short, postcolonial *e* – Kenya (k nja). It irritates my mother when I say 'Kenya' and she corrects me, 'Keen-ya,' she says. But her insistence on the anachronistic pronunciation of the country only adds to my impression that she is speaking of a make-believe place forever trapped in the celluloid of another time, as if she were a third-person participant in a movie starring herself, a perfect horse and flawless equatorial light. The violence and the injustices that came with colonialism seem – in my mother's version of events – to have happened in some other unwatched movie, to some other unwatched people.
>
> Which in a way, they were.[37]

[36] Fuller, *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness*, 93.
[37] Ibid., 92–93, italics in original.

As we saw in chapter three, pronunciation is used as a marker of identity and values, and here, Fuller uses that marker to underline a fundamental difference between herself and her mother. Yet even while Fuller disaffiliates herself from her mother's 'anachronistic' world view, thereby pre-empting criticism of it, she also disarms such criticism by suggesting that her mother was simply caught up in an illusion rather than a complicit participant in colonial violence – similar to the whites Godwin describes 'in the thrall' of Smith.

In the historical work about white Rhodesians which Godwin wrote together with Ian Hancock in 1993, they argue that 'perhaps their worst collective fault was an almost infinite capacity for self-deception.'[38] The suggestion in both Fuller and Godwin's memoirs supports Hancock and Godwin's representation of white Rhodesians as essentially good people who were more interested in maintaining a comfortable way of life than in the 'big issues' and whose racism and defence of colonialism stemmed from self-delusion rather than some evil scheme.[39] Indeed, Hancock and Godwin's argument that white Rhodesians 'voted for heroes rather than policies', like Fuller's representation of her mother, suggests that they failed to grasp the implication of their support for white supremacy. Following Smith 'lemming like […] into the abyss', white Rhodesians were supposedly 'easily led, and more easily deceived'[40] – an analysis which acquits ordinary citizens while condemning their leader. In her depiction of her mother's movie-like idyllisation of settlers, Fuller seeks to make the reader understand the motivation and mind-set that lay behind individual subscription to white rule as detached from its violent reality of which she shows that she is herself aware. Her mother, then, is used to mark a distinction between Fuller and the colonial discourse of her parents' generation, but also to give that generation a sympathetic face.

While Fuller and Godwin use their parents differently for political positioning, they share the problem of how to treat their own participation

[38] Godwin and Hancock, *Rhodesians Never Die*, 11.
[39] Ibid., 9.
[40] Ibid.

in a racist regime. There is a tension in their texts between on the one hand the politics that they clearly want to communicate to their reader, that is, their distancing manoeuvres as regards the racist mind-set of their upbringing, and then on the other hand their softening of the image of white Rhodesians, as though opting for a distinction between the values of the system and the values of the individuals.

Even more so than political sounding boards, Fuller and Godwin use their families to justify a sense of belonging. As we saw in chapter four, 'home' is at once deeply intimate and a carrier of cultural meanings.[41] Writing from overseas, the two expatriate authors both assert that they feel at home in Africa, but they also point to the challenges to this emotion, from within and without. To overcome these challenges, I argue, they rely on their family attachment as an indisputable link that is more or less universally acknowledged as signifying home.

To begin with the most intimate challenge, both authors interrogate their own ambiguous sense of home. They tend to use these reflections to finally insist on their attachment. Thus, Godwin says his book is 'a tribute to Africa – the home I never knew I had',[42] at once pointing to a former lack of feeling at home and a present confirmation that Africa was indeed his home. The use of the past tense here is interesting, as it suggests that Africa may no longer be his home at the time of writing. Compared with his second memoir, this first one is much less assertive of his belonging. The context of government hostility towards whites which cast them as aliens arguably had the effect of making Godwin more insistent on his right to call Zimbabwe 'home' in his second memoir.

In the mid-1990s, however, Godwin was able to explore his past troubled emotions towards his home country, including his childhood envy of Afrikaners for their more uncomplicated sense of identity and his longing for a safer place. In *Mukiwa*, he discusses the feeling he had as a boy that he had only tenuous ties to Africa and how it made him jealous of Afrikaners

[41] Blunt and Dowling, *Home*, 2–3; Webster, *Imagining Home*, ix.
[42] Godwin, *Mukiwa*, Preface.

and black people because they had 'lots of relatives in Africa'.[43] Searching for an attachment,

> I became a fervent admirer of the Afrikaners. After all, they were *real* white Africans. That's what Afrikaner meant, it was simply the Afrikaans word for African. They seemed more secure than us, more settled. I began to wish that I was an Afrikaner with a solid identity and I even started spelling my name the Afrikaans way – Pieter.[44]

While this was only a passing phase, inspired in particular by an Afrikaans teenage sweetheart, it is significant that he juxtaposes Afrikaners and white Rhodesians to elucidate a perceived identity deficit. His name change was an attempt to try to make up for this deficit. Whereas in *When a Crocodile*, Godwin uses his parents to signal his continued belonging in Zimbabwe, in *Mukiwa*, their first generation migrant status is part of what made his childhood self feel insecure about whether he belonged. The only relative he had in Africa, an aunt, is also used to question rather than confirm his African identity. He describes visiting her grave where he recalled 'her vain attempts to impose brittle English values on the *veld*. Her whole life seemed as out of place as a bone china teacup at a beer drink'. He cried 'wracking gushes of repressed weariness and self-pity. At the impermanence of my family in Africa. At our silly misguided attempts to fashion the continent to our alien ways.'[45] The alienness of his aunt serves to confirm his own 'impermanence'. But the image of the aunt as a bone china teacup at a beer drink also stresses his family's vulnerability. In his first memoir, Godwin's feeling at home is represented as threatened both by a lack of ancestry which made him feel less secure in his identity than Afrikaners and by the physical threat to his security from African nature and guerrillas.

These threats caused him, he says, to dream of leaving the country altogether. From early childhood, 'I longed to live in a safer place, a place

[43] Ibid., 139.
[44] Ibid., 187, italics in original.
[45] Ibid., 399, italics in original.

where there weren't so many dangers to spoil my fun,' and after listing all the natural and supernatural dangers, he concludes, 'a place where there were no *tsotsis* setting fire to the forests or killing Europeans in the *chimurenga*.'[46] This place, he says, he imagined might be England, 'a gentle deciduous place where man had tamed nature and moulded it to do his bidding.' [47] While his wavering feeling of belonging is linked to an inadequate community of ancestors, his urge to leave is coupled with physical danger.[48] Three times during *Mukiwa*, his younger self travels to England, and each of his three trips is associated with escape: 'I felt a wave of relief that I was still alive, that I hadn't been killed in this stupid little war, that I was going to be allowed to live to be an adult after all.'[49] Conflating his country and the war, he suggests that his country had become a physical threat to his very survival and he 'resolved never to come back to Rhodesia.'[50]

Yet despite these disavowals of his country, he retrospectively excises all the parts of his life that happened abroad. He even omits the fact that the book is written from London where he has lived for five years at the time of writing – a fact which only comes across in the second memoir.[51] For the reader, then, Godwin's attachment to Rhodesia/Zimbabwe is a pained one, but there is no doubt that it is this attachment that he considers meaningful when trying to convey his identity in the present. Godwin describes going beyond physically leaving the continent to attempting to eradicate his Africanness entirely. After his coverage of the Matabeleland massacre had made him a '*persona non grata* in my own home',[52] forcing him to leave the country, he says:

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[46] Ibid., 138, italics in original.
[47] Ibid., 139.
[48] Chennells notes that this 'opposition between a violent Africa and a gentle England which people have shaped to accommodate them is a conventional trope of the imperial romance.' Chennells, 'Self-Representation and National Memory', 139.
[49] Godwin, *Mukiwa*, 310, see also pp. 321 and 325.
[50] Ibid., 325.
[51] Godwin, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 12.
[52] Godwin, *Mukiwa*, 385, italics in original.

> I tried hard to forget about Africa after that. I tried to dismiss it from my head as a brutal, violent place. A place of death. And when people asked me what nationality I was, I replied, 'English, of course.' And if my accent betrayed me, I might concede vaguely, 'I spent a bit of time in Africa, as a boy.'[53]

This denial of his background only accentuates the impossibility of forgetting. Just as with his teenage name change, he here tried to co-opt a different nationality. Yet once again, accent served as a marker of identity, here 'betraying' Godwin by obstructing his attempts to hide his African background. Indeed, his self-imposed amnesia was unsuccessful, and four lines later, he has his protagonist back in Africa.[54] While he says he tried to forget Africa, it is his time overseas that is left out of his memoir.

In Godwin's first memoir, he thus largely passes over any part of his life that did not take place in Africa, but explores his own ambiguous feelings about Zimbabwe as his home. In the second memoir, more of the narrative takes place abroad but at the same time there are fewer concessions to the idea of white African identity as a site of contention. Early in *When a Crocodile*, he describes his life in 1996, when the book starts, in the year his first memoir was published. He says he had lived in South Africa for five years beginning in 1986, and '[s]ince then, I have been based out of London, though I come back often to Africa, and I know in my bones that I will return here to live one day, that this is still my home.'[55] This self-assured conviction that Africa is his home despite more than a decade abroad contrasts with the ambiguous emotions of the first memoir where it was his inner struggle rather than external conditions which made him question his belonging. In 2006, Godwin argues emphatically that he does belong and he uses his family attachment deliberately to underscore this.

Now, the contestations come from the outside, from Mugabe's government and thugs, consistently represented as racist against whites.

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[53] Ibid., 386.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Godwin, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 12.

Godwin describes trying to convince his parents to flee the deteriorating situation in year 2000 and their protest that they would not move:

> This is their home, and they're damned if they will allow Mugabe to drive them out, to win. They still believe that change is coming soon and that they have an obligation to stay to help usher it in. Besides, they feel responsible for so many people – colleagues, friends, employees – people they will not abandon, a way of life they will not surrender.[56]

His parents' stubborn insistence that Zimbabwe is their home secures an attachment for Godwin, and a few sentences later he describes taking a job to do a feature on Victoria Falls because '[a]t least it will take me home.'[57] So the fact that this is his parents' home can be said to open a place for it to continue being Godwin's home, too. But it is important how he justifies their feeling at home. Whereas in *Mukiwa*, his family is associated with impermanence because of their recent arrival, in *When a Crocodile*, Godwin places less emphasis on ancestry and more on contributions to the country. In his representation of many white families in Zimbabwe, including his own, Godwin stresses how much they have built from a barren country after arriving with nothing but their dreams of a home and their will to work hard. In the second memoir, then, home is something you make, not something you earn by birth – challenging Mugabe's interpretation of whites in Africa as 'foreign'. In this response to the present political discourse, Godwin leaves behind his previous self-scrutiny to firmly assert the right of whites to call Zimbabwe home because of their efforts to develop the country – after 2000, Godwin no longer sees these efforts as 'silly misguided attempts'. The idea of his parents' responsibility towards local people can be read as the particular white liberal strand to which his parents belong, but it also helps Godwin to justify the presence of his parents and

[56] Ibid., 104.
[57] Ibid., 105. For a discussion of the difficulties of white Zimbabweans still resident in the country with making the multi-racial nation their 'home' by relinquishing colonial values, see Fisher, *Pioneers, Settlers, Aliens, Exiles*.

other whites as beneficial to Zimbabwe, staying not for their own benefit but out of a sense of obligation.

The above passage also stresses his parents' insistence upon a 'way of life'. Like the idea of responsibility (or 'white man's burden', one might say), the invocation of a particular 'way of life' is reminiscent of the kind of rhetoric Ian Smith uses to defend his fight for white rule. Luise White has demonstrated the importance in white supremacist discourse of the late 1970s' of the notion that Rhodesians were fighting to maintain a certain Rhodesian 'way of life' which was constantly contrasted to the chaos of other African countries.[58] In Godwin's case, it is not quite clear what 'way of life' he implies, and rather than swimming pools and sun-downers, he may be referring to the democratic and tolerant society his parents are said to be working for. However, his depiction of Africa as a 'geography of doom' does seem to support the observation of Pilossof and Primorac that the post-2000 years saw white Zimbabweans revert to a rhetoric of the 1970s.[59] For the author of *Rhodesians Never Die*, this uncritical rendition of his parents' and other whites' assertions of their feeling of responsibility seems somewhat naïve. Be that as it may, Godwin is able to tap into his parents' sense of obligation towards a local community to place himself vicariously as belonging to that self-same community of whites and blacks in Zimbabwe, united against Mugabe.

Like Godwin, Fuller also describes interrogations of her attachment to Africa. These include African children mocking her skin colour and making her realise that

> I am the *wrong* colour […] I stand out against the khaki bush like a large marshmallow to a gook with a gun. White. African. White-African.
>
> 'But what are you?' I am asked over and over again.
>
> 'Where are you from *originally*?' […]

[58] White, 'The Utopia of Working Phones'.
[59] Godwin, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 203–4; Pilossof, *The Unbearable Whiteness of Being*, 118–19; Primorac, 'Rhodesians Never Die?', 204.

I say, 'I'm African.' But not black.

And I say, 'I was born in England,' by mistake.

But, 'I have lived in Rhodesia (which is now Zimbabwe) and in Malawi (which used to be Nyasaland) and in Zambia (which used to be Northern Rhodesia).'

And I add, 'Now I live in America,' through marriage.

And (full disclosure), 'But my parents were born of Scottish and English parents.'

What does that make me?'[60]

Fuller describes the predicament of so many migrants and their descendants whose appearance prompts demands that they account for their background in a way other people do not have to. The fast forward from the childhood memory of children asking her where she is from to a more recent memory from after her marriage of people still inquiring about her origins serves to suggest that this is a permanent condition of questioned belonging. As her final self-reflection shows, she is not only subjected to questions from others but also to her own ponderings about what her complicated trajectory makes her. Fuller implies that her attachments to Britain are somehow suspect, since telling about them constitutes a 'mistake' and 'full disclosure' which undermine her claim to being 'African'. Like Godwin's, Fuller's parents are invoked in this rumination about individual belonging, where their overseas background, like her own expatriate status, are part of what complicates her claim to calling Africa home.

Yet these thoughts about origins do not bring about the kind of questioning of home that they did in Godwin's first memoir. Fuller's memoirs are both full of stories of the family moving from one farm to another, but these do not present the protagonist with existential anxiety. Rather, it seems that home is where her family is. Indeed, she describes coming 'home' to her parents' farm from the US, in spite of never having

[60] Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, 8, italics in original.

lived on this farm herself.[61] Like Godwin, Fuller only mentions her American life very briefly in *Don't Let's Go* and only slightly more often in *Cocktail Hour*. Yet in her second memoir, she, like Godwin, uses the firm focus on her parents and their African presence to make up for an increased recognition of her own absence. Thus, their families provide the occasion for the authors return visits. Both authors almost always come back with the express purpose of visiting their parents and the scenes from the airport often include a welcome committee of family members.[62]

While Fuller lives in the US at the time of writing, she legitimates her claim to calling Africa home through her continued bodily response to the place. She explains how much like second nature the smells and sounds of Africa were to her as a child: 'What I can't know about Africa as a child (because I have no memory of any other place) is her smell; hot, sweet, smoky, salty, sharp-soft.' She contrasts this to 'the damp wool sock of London-Heathrow,' which smells 'flat-empty', 'car fumes, concrete, street-wet', and proceeds to describe the noises of the bush.[63] Ann Laura Stoler and Karen Strassler have suggested that such sensory impressions are a different way of structuring memories, more focused on the habitual, the intimate and the domestic than on grand events.[64] In Fuller's memoirs, her familiarity with smells and sounds are indeed used to confirm her intimate connection to Africa as home and to link the domestic family home to the larger attachment to the land.[65]

Indeed, as Harris suggests, in Fuller's case, '[b]elonging […] is closely tied to an idealized notion of land.'[66] She also notes, though, that the family moves around a lot and 'as their relationship with the land becomes increasingly transitory, the landscape is described as increasingly hostile.'[67] Yet as Harris herself suggests, this hostility does not diminish Fuller's claim

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[61] Fuller, *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness*, 217.
[62] See e.g. Ibid., 216–17; Godwin, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 43, 104–5, 232.
[63] Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, 133–34.
[64] Stoler and Strassler, 'Castings for the Colonial', 10, 34.
[65] Her adult homecoming scenes also tend to invoke sensory impressions. See e.g. Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, 295; Fuller, *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness*, 217.
[66] Harris, 'Writing Home', 114. For more about the use of traumatic memories, see below.
[67] Ibid., 115.

to belonging. Instead, this claim is partly staked out through rendition of traumatic memories of losing three siblings there, which are part of what makes Africa appear hostile to the family, but which also secure its status as home: 'The land that takes these children is the homeland; not through a nostalgic memory of childhood or idealistic reinvention of the relationship to that land, but through the personal trauma experienced there.'[68] While Harris suggests that Fuller's vision of the land is not nostalgic, I would argue that its hostility is in fact part of what Fuller seems to long for. Indeed, she tends to romanticise danger. While Godwin explicitly says the dangers of Africa were a motivating factor for his settling abroad, Fuller seems to revel in the natural and human threats. When landing in Lusaka as an adult, Fuller is overwhelmed by happiness at the casual hostility of the airport officials: 'I want to kiss the guns-swinging officials. I want to open my arms into the sweet familiarity of home. The incongruous, lawless, joyful, violent, upside-down, illogical certainty of Africa comes at me like a rolling rainstorm, until I am drenched with relief.'[69] In this sensuous image, it is the danger of Africa that drenches her with the relief of home, suggesting that peril acts as an attraction to her. At another return visit, a card game is interrupted by dogs barking: 'It's been years since I've heard that particular bark, but I recognize it instantly. I put my cards down and look at Dad. "That's a snake bark," I say.'[70] This instinctive reaction to danger despite years abroad signals Fuller's continued knowledge of Africa, not only through her parents but through her own embodied responses.

Fuller uses all of these affirmations of her enthusiastic familiarity with local dangers to differentiate herself from the whites who are only passing through. When she is back from America, her parents have an English visitor whom she describes as a 'two-year wonder. People like this never last beyond two malaria seasons, at most. Then he'll go back to England and say, "When I was in Zambia…" for the rest of his life.'[71] Fuller sets herself and her parents apart from the kind of transitory whites who cannot handle

[68] Ibid.
[69] Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, 295–96.
[70] Fuller, *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness*, 222.
[71] Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, 18.

Africa. She seems oblivious to the irony that her disdain for those who have left is complicated by the fact that she, too, has left Zambia. In *Cocktail Hour,* she cites the existence of a commemorative community of former Kenyan settlers: 'Forever they would bore to death anyone who would listen about the perfect equatorial light of East Africa. "When-wes" they were called, as in, "When we were in Kenya. …"'[72] She does not here recognise that she, too, is one of those people who have left Africa and made a career out of reminiscing about her African past. She even cites her mother's accusation that she has 'no patience with nostalgia'[73] to stress her progressive credentials and advice the reader that the book will not be a nostalgic piece – a warning that jars with the actual style and content of her memoirs that emanate nostalgia for Africa as home.

The continuing presence of their own families enables Fuller and Godwin to affirm Zimbabwe/Zambia as their home, despite any inner qualms or outside pressures. The fact that these families have experienced losses and are unthreateningly frail increases their value as anchors for personal reminiscing about Africa as home.

Family Nostalgia and Tragedy

Part of the tension in Fuller and Godwin's texts arises from their complicated emotions toward white Rhodesia, at once the place of a nostalgically remembered childhood and of a political system they condemn as adults. Tackling that tension, the authors emphasise intimate childhood memories and set up a Fall from an Eden, they tell stories of family tragedies which position them as victims rather than perpetrators and they describe visits to personal memory sites lamenting the present while keeping the political past out of focus.

Fundamental to the nostalgic is, as Dennis Walder puts it, 'the yearning for a different and previous time/place/experience'.[74] In

[72] Fuller, *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness*, 96.
[73] Ibid., 16.
[74] Walder, *Postcolonial Nostalgias*, 9. See also De Mul, 'Nostalgia for Empire'; Assmann, 'Memories of Post-Imperial Nations', 174.

retrospect, nostalgic memories take on an Edenic quality in juxtaposition to a less magical and innocent present. Fuller and Godwin might protest that their childhood memories are not very Edenic, that they have been at pains to emphasise all the death and discrimination they witnessed growing up. Yet their texts do appeal to audience nostalgia through depictions of the natural scene and innocent childhood memories. This is an example of the tension in the texts between the authors' liberal self-image and their attachment to a time and lifestyle associated with white rule. A way to overcome this dilemma, as Harris points out, is to invoke the innocence of childhood. Referring to *Mukiwa*, she describes how Godwin uses 'the child-subject's pre-political consciousness' which 'puts him beyond reproach, and yet the broader political conditions are made clear to the reader.'[75] Thus Godwin's child protagonist has little awareness of racial conflict as opposed to the adult protagonist. In a way, the child's perspective allows the narrator to take on a position of naivety about larger political issues as though the unawareness of political issues meant their disappearance. The fact that their childhoods coincide with white rule may make it difficult, for the authors as well as for their audience, to determine whether nostalgia relates to childhood or to white rule. As Tony Simoes da Silva notes, '[i]nsofar as childhood will always presuppose, indeed signify a degree of innocence from broader ideological elements, frequently it is through the voice of the small child that White South Africans seek to negotiate the past with an eye on the present.'[76] Fuller and Godwin speak to a larger commemorative community which recalls white settler Africa with nostalgia, adding to this their own nostalgia. Such private memories may be considered more legitimate, especially when evoking the innocence of childhood. Thus, a dehistoricised version of the past which paints over racial inequalities or one which naturalises them can be defended as a credible rendition of the child's

[75] Harris, 'Writing Home', 109.
[76] da Silva, 'Redeeming Self', 12.

experience while working at the same time to provide first-hand evidence of happy racial relations.[77]

While, as we saw above, Godwin and Fuller differ in the way in which they represent their childhood homes as racist or tolerant, they both describe their close relationship with one or more of the family's black servants, repeating a trope which we find in a number of end of empire autobiographies.[78] Both of them stress the physical closeness to the nanny, her smell and the look of her skin.[79] This is reminiscent of what Stoler and Strassler have observed about former Dutch colonisers' memories of Java in which 'stories of former servants are filled with tender anecdotes, demonstrations of affection, loyalty and mutual recognitions.'[80] This is not, they document, how the servants themselves recall relationships to their former employers, and yet in white nostalgia this is 'a familiar story: the feminized, depoliticized home as the locus for a kinder, gentler colonialism.'[81] Interestingly, the closeness to the nanny is remembered as illicit: Fuller describes how she would stick her hand under the blouse of her nanny to feel her breast when she had hurt herself or was tired. 'I know, without knowing why, that Mum would smack me if she saw me doing this.' [82] This suggests a special kind of intimate relationship which circumvented the otherwise restrictive race relations of the era as Fuller projects her liberal politics back in time onto an, at least occasionally, colour-blind childhood self. Harris argues that in Fuller and Godwin, '[n]ostalgia for a Zimbabwean childhood allows the writer to imagine a space of political and racial innocence and naïveté; a prelapsarian state of unquestioned belonging as a white child in Zimbabwe or Rhodesia.'[83] This

[77] Compare Sara De Mul's analysis of Dutch colonial memoirs in which '[t]he focus on the personal and the sentimental in these childhood reminiscences softens colonial hierarchies, and diverts attention from the harsh living conditions of the local population which provided the foundations on which a privileged childhood rested.' De Mul, 'Nostalgia for Empire', 424.
[78] Chung, *Re-Living the Second Chimurenga*; Mittelhölzer, *A Swarthy Boy*; Moore-Gilbert, *The Setting Sun*.
[79] Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, 141; Godwin, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 24.
[80] Stoler and Strassler, 'Castings for the Colonial', 10.
[81] Ibid., 9–10.
[82] Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, 141. See also Godwin, *Mukiwa*, 27.
[83] Harris, 'Writing Home', 108.

happens through images of happy race relations or an idyllic natural scene, linked to the child's lack of awareness of the larger political context.

The idea of the prelapsarian idyll of childhood gains its strength from the contrast to a fall, a loss of innocence or a disruption of the old order. Symptomatically, Godwin signals the total descent into chaos in the moment when the servants turn on their masters. This comes out most strongly in the case of his parents' long-time servant Mavis who deserted them. Like the Dutch in Java, Godwin's parents are shown to have thought of their relationship to Mavis as something more intimate than a master-servant relationship, yet their trust was broken and the servant's loyalty was not to be counted on because of the extreme situation the country had entered. Under pressure, Mavis allowed the violence from outside to slip into the family home in the shape of thugs demanding 'retrenchment payment', causing Godwin's mother to ask '"How *could* you Mavis?"' As though through divine punishment, Mavis died shortly after this episode, out of shame, so we gather, as she had stopped taking the pills with which Godwin's mother had supplied her.[84]

Susannah Egan has identified a number of 'patterns of experience in autobiography' of which the 'Loss of Eden' is one, associated with the loss of innocence and the attainment of knowledge and experience.[85] Harris suggests that this occurs in *Mukiwa* as Godwin comes 'to political and racial awareness' during his youth, whereas Pilossof suggests that it is at independence that 'dramatic enlightenment is forced upon' Fuller and Godwin.[86] However, particularly in Fuller's first memoir, the emphasis is actually on another, more personal fall, which can nonetheless be seen as symbolically associated with the prospect of independence, but with little hint of the 'enlightenment' Pilossof suggests. 'My life is sliced in half',[87] Fuller says, referring to early 1978, when she was eight years old and her toddler sister Olivia drowned. Her illustration of this bisection subtly links

[84] Godwin, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 171–73, 181, italics in original.
[85] Egan, *Patterns of Experience in Autobiography*, 68–103.
[86] Harris, 'Writing Home', 110; Pilossof, 'Land, Race and Belonging in the Memoirs of White Zimbabweans', 633.
[87] Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, 95.

the family's tragedy to the crisis of white Rhodesia. She describes the time when Olivia was still alive when all the Fuller children would sit on the back of her father's truck while he drove recklessly to sprinkle mud on them while they were singing 'Rhodesians never die', the quasi-national anthem of the white Rhodesians during the civil war: 'We'll be Rhodesian forever and ever on top of the roof driving through the mud up the side of the mountain, through thick secret forests which may or may not be seething with terrorists, we'll keep singing to keep the car going. […] We are ecstatic with fear-joy.'[88] This is placed in contrast with the time after the death of her sister, when her father's reckless driving would be alcohol-induced and destructive: 'This is the way a man drives when he hopes he will slam into a tree and there will be silence afterward and he won't have to think anymore. Now we are only scared.'[89] In spite of this sudden wish for 'silence', during their next drive, their father still shouted at them to sing, but while they sang the same song, the singing seems to have been forced, an attempt to keep up the good spirits which was interrupted by their drunken mother's request for silence.[90] The shift in the ambience of their driving and singing is used to demonstrate the consequences for the family of Olivia's death. But the recurrence of 'Rhodesians never die', first in the context of 'fear-joy' ecstasy and then in the 'war-ravaged Rhodesia'[91], suggests that it is not only Olivia, but the optimism surrounding Rhodesian survival that has died. On a deeply personal as well as a more political level, then, the moment signifies a loss of innocence. While Fuller condemns the system of white supremacy, the blissful ignorance of childhood is still fondly remembered.

The nostalgic celebration of the old home implies its subsequent disappearance. For Fuller and Godwin, there are fond memories of their lives in Africa as well as lamentation at the present state of affairs. The nostalgic and the tragic intertwine so that they, with their catalogue of

[88] Ibid., 96.
[89] Ibid., 98.
[90] Ibid., 101.
[91] Ibid., 100.

personal losses, come dangerously close to lamenting the disappearance of white rule, even as they reject its politics as morally defunct.[92]

However, there is another contrast between a prelapsarian past and subsequent Fall in Godwin's memoirs, which is not concerned with nostalgic childhood memories. The strongest contrast in Godwin's two memoirs is thus between a brief time of racial harmony after independence and the moment when Mugabe's government showed its 'true face'. In *Mukiwa*, the Edenic era is the first years of the 1980s, a 'brief and liberating period' when 'thousands, blacks and whites, […] came back from abroad to take part in the bold new experiment, to help create a multiracial society that would be the envy of Africa. They called us 'returnees' and we believed in the government's policy of reconciliation – between races and between tribes.'[93] As the word 'believed' implies, this trust in the government turned out to be misplaced and the brief time of peace was soon interrupted by violence in Matabeleland. Godwin commits 45 pages to describing his perilous efforts to report the massacre to the world placing himself at the centre of events.[94] Afterwards, 'Zimbabwe would never be quite the same again for me. Not after what had gone on in Matabeleland.'[95] No longer imbued with the hope for a positive future, Godwin depicts the massacre as the Fall from which Zimbabwe cannot go back.

And yet, in *When a Crocodile*, the massacre earns only a one-paragraph mention.[96] Instead of the early 1980s, it is the mid-1990s which are recalled as a prelapsarian time of racial harmony and prosperity. Godwin compares the country to the time of war, saying 'today the countryside radiates peace' and compares the schools that produce 'Africa's most literate population' to 'the apocalyptic Africa that presses in around us'.[97] He uses a family memory to establish the contrast with the present. At his sister's wedding in

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[92] Compare Patricia Lorcin's observation about French women's memoirs in Algeria after decolonisation which were informed by a 'lore of victimhood' that 'underpin[ned] so much of *pied-noir* nostalgia.' Lorcin, *Historicizing Colonial Nostalgia*, 171–74, italics in original.
[93] Godwin, *Mukiwa*, 327.
[94] Ibid., 340–85.
[95] Ibid., 381.
[96] Godwin, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 23–24.
[97] Ibid., 34–35.

1997, her maid of honour was her best friend, a black woman: 'black and white together, totally at ease, friends since elementary school, Zimbabweans now for nearly twenty years. Race, it seems, is finally losing its headlock on our identities in this little corner of Africa.'[98] This happy memory of family and racial unity acts as a contrast to the rapid descent into chaos and racial antagonism which the rest of the book depicts. It is memories of a time like this that cause his parents and other white Zimbabweans to continually insist that the situation is not serious, that society will settle back to normal, that '"This madness will pass,"'[99] while Godwin becomes increasingly insistent that it will not. Here, he implies that his expatriate position gives him a clarity of vision that people who have remained in Zimbabwe may lack. Together with his London-based sister, he compares their parents to a frog that does not notice that it is being boiled alive.[100] As in *Mukiwa*, where he describes his heroic reporting on the Matabeleland massacre, in *When a Crocodile* Godwin casts himself in a prophetic role as the person who warns fellow-whites and the wider world of what is going on in Zimbabwe. His insider-outsider position can be said to allow him both to report with authority about African issues to the outside as well as to see the development in Zimbabwe in a way locals might not.

As the shifting moments for the Loss of Eden in Godwin's two memoirs illustrate, the trope is a rhetorically convenient one to signal in the present when things went wrong. Like the moments discussed in chapters three and four when authors who write about their education and journeys to Britain reach a new awareness about their colonial upbringing and seek out new identities, these are moments of new realisations. In Godwin's case, the moments of realising the government's atrocities also provoke individual action in the shape of his attempts to bring those stories to the attention of the world. However, unlike the turning points of the earlier chapters, the Fall in Fuller and Godwin's memoirs is not optimistic. They do not, as the Caribbean and Australian autobiographers, write after the successful

[98] Ibid., 42.
[99] Ibid., 73, 102, 115.
[100] Ibid., 104. See also p. 88.

decolonisation which constitutes the collective fulfilment of their individual nationalist assertions, projected back in time. Instead, they write as witnesses to the continued marginalisation of the population with which they identify. To convey that experience, they position themselves as victims through stories of personal loss.

Relating one's individual memory through the community of the family can be a way to ensure legitimacy for one's interpretation of the past, similar to what politicians are able to do through claiming to be representatives of 'the people'. This is a different legitimacy, however, because it relies strongly on establishing empathy. Richard Wilson and Richard Brown define empathy as 'a projection of one's own mental state into that of another. Whereas in a state of sympathy one says "I recognize your pain," in empathy one says "I feel your pain."'[101] Fuller and Godwin's representations of deaths in families are clearly aimed at making the reader feel the pain of loss, not just recognise it. As Harris observes, quoting Slavoj Žižek, once we identify with victims of violence we stop asking critical questions. Žižek argues that 'the overpowering horror of violent acts and empathy with the victims inexorably function as a lure which prevents us from thinking. A *dispassionate* conceptual development of the typology of violence must by definition ignore its traumatic impact.'[102] If we extend this to empathy and identification with traumatised victims more broadly, we can see how the tragic family deaths in Fuller and Godwin's memoirs enable a different kind of truth claim which may recognise faulty memory but insists on emotional truth and short circuits critical examination of the political implications of what is represented as deeply personal losses.

Through the family, then, Fuller and Godwin's accounts become more than subjective expositions, yet without claiming the objective 'truth' that politicians rely on. Indeed, Godwin prefaces *Mukiwa* with an emphasis that this is 'not a work of forensic research', but instead he has 'written as I remember, with all the foibles and imperfections brought on by the passage

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[101] Wilson and Brown, 'Introduction', 2, n. 2.
[102] Slavoj Žižek, *Violence* (New York: Picador, 2008), p. 3-4, quoted in Harris, 'Facing/Defacing Robert Mugabe', 115, italics in original.

of time.'[103] Yet apart from this disclaimer, Godwin's narratives do not alert their readers to the fallibility of the author's memory.[104] Nor does Fuller attract attention to her own memory flaws in spite of some key moments being represented differently in the two memoirs, suggesting if not faulty memory then artistic reworking of the past.[105] As for her mother, Fuller might question how she narrates the national past, but there seems to be a breach of etiquette if the reader starts to poke further into the mother's credibility, especially when it comes to how she represents personal tragedy. As da Silva notes, his irreverent reading of Fuller may come across as 'unethical': 'One of the contractual obligations of life-writing is that the reader must at the very least respect the truth, and the trauma the writer proposes.'[106] The family member becomes a privileged kind of first hand witness, one which the author knows so well as to be able to share with the reader any hesitations to the witness' credibility that one might have, yet at the same time also the kind of witness whom it is indelicate to question. In particular in his second memoir, Godwin is able to draw on his parents' continued life in Harare to corroborate stories of the situation in Zimbabwe. He extends this focus on his own family to white families more broadly, all suffering in the face of forced evictions. At times, his narrative reads like an extended journalistic feature article with interviews with white victims whose stories of human losses circumvent critical investigation of the discourse in which they are rendered. As a narrative device, then, the family is convenient as it allows the memoirist to engage with a politicised past and present and escape a lot of the criticism it would normally provoke.

As discussed in chapter two, trauma theory has been important for the development of memory studies. Because of the clear position of victim and perpetrator in the case of the Holocaust, trauma studies have sometimes

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[103] Godwin, *Mukiwa*, Preface.
[104] Assertions like this of the fallibility of the author's memory are common in autobiographical prefaces, in particular those of historians who often, like Godwin does, refer to their historical works for people who want 'forensic research'. See e.g. Clark, *The Puzzles of Childhood*; Horne, *The Education of Young Donald*; Ward, *A Radical Life*.
[105] See for instance her different depictions of Olivia's death, Fuller, *Don't Let's Go to the Dogs Tonight*, 92; Fuller, *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness*, 178.
[106] da Silva, 'Narrating a White Africa', 474–75.

neglected to consider how traumatic memories may be employed by people whose position is at once one of victimhood *and* guilt.[107] However, Norman Finkelstein argues that even Holocaust memory has been appropriated for ideological purposes to claim Jewish victimhood in the face of charges of human rights violations in the Israeli-Palestine conflict.[108] With Fuller and Godwin, we see a similar case of pointing to one's own trauma to divert attention from one's potential perpetrator status and deflect criticism of participation in an unjust and violent system.

Here, it might be useful to consider Dirk Moses and Michael Rothberg's conversation about the ethics of transcultural memory and comparisons between different sites of memory, which create heated debate about, say, the relative suffering of the Holocaust and Stalinist terror. Rothberg proposes that we must take into consideration 'to what ends the comparison is being made; here a continuum runs from *competition* to *solidarity*.'[109] So when Fuller and Godwin focus on the traumatic memories of white families, we can place them on this '*axis of political affect*' by asking whether they do so to call for mutual solidarity between white and black experience or to compete for empathy.[110] Here, I want to argue that the stress on family deaths and the near-neglect and anonymisation of black victims suggests that whites have a particular claim to victimhood which competes with that of black people. Through heart-rending stories of losing one child after another, Fuller's mother's racism becomes a minor issue, a 'quirk' as Pilossof calls it, in comparison with the human tragedy she has been through.[111] Thus, an interesting feature of Fuller and Godwin is their combination of the nostalgic and the tragic, using personal traumas to legitimate their nostalgia towards the past and make it more palatable. As we saw with Fuller's division of her life into before and after Olivia's death,

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[107] The more recent exploration of 'perpetrator trauma' has focused on the trauma of perpetrating violence. See Morag, *Waltzing with Bashir*, 7; Giesen, 'The Trauma of Perpetrators'.
[108] Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry*.
[109] Rothberg in Moses and Rothberg, 'A Dialogue on the Ethics and Politics of Transcultural Memory', 33, italics in original.
[110] Rothberg in ibid., italics in original.
[111] Pilossof, 'Land, Race and Belonging in the Memoirs of White Zimbabweans', 633.

this bisection casts a rosy light over the era of white rule in spite of her condemnation of Smith's regime.

Through the more or less explicit associations of their siblings' deaths with the war, the authors place themselves as victims not only of Mugabe's anti-white policies, but also of the Smith government's war and demonstrate the omnipresence of war in the protagonists' lives. Godwin's sister's death in a failed army ambush is recalled as all the more shocking because everyone anticipated him to die, not his sister who was the 'keeper of the family flame'.[112] While Fuller's three siblings died of meningitis, drowning and a misshapen palate, the pain at their deaths is made sense of through the family's anticipation of violence. When they were driving, she and her older sister would put Olivia on the seat between them,

> so that if we were ambushed, a bullet would have to go though the Land Rover door *and* one of us before it could ever reach our baby. There was an unspoken rule. If we were all going to die, it would be in this order: Dad, Mum, Vanessa, me and then unthinkably last but only over all of our dead bodies, Olivia.[113]

The existence of such a hierarchy suggests the constant presence of death associated with the war, even if none of the children actually died because of the war itself. And as with Godwin's sister's death, the fact that death did not come from the expected angle makes it more unbearable. When her mother was informed of Olivia's death, she instinctively thought it was war-related: 'Mum began shaking all over, "What? They were attacked? She was… Was she shot? What happened? An ambush?"' When told that she drowned, 'Mum shook her head, bewildered at the impossibility of this. "No!"' [114] In a world where war had made death a constant fear, Fuller and Godwin demonstrate how shocking it could still be. The instinctive reaction

[112] Godwin, *Mukiwa*, 315.
[113] Fuller, *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness*, 170, italics in original.
[114] Ibid., 178.

illustrates the extent to which their lives had become governed by fear, so that their families are the mental, if not physical, victims of war.

Even more importantly, the pain associated with the memories of losing family members, which is very vividly described, elevates this pain above all other suffering. Rothberg discusses the axis of comparison between '*equation* and *differentiation*' which reaches from 'relativization' to 'sacralization'.[115] Everyone has a family and can identify with the sanctity of this unit. Harris draws on Judith Butler to suggest that some bodies, in this case that of the family member, are considered more 'grievable' than others.[116] The tear-provoking stories of Fuller and Godwin's siblings numb the reader when it comes to stories of anonymous victims of the war. Like the hierarchy of who were allowed to die first in the Fuller household, the memoirs create a hierarchy of who will be mourned.

As he left Zimbabwe after a visit in 2003 when his mother had had her hip operated and the government had responded violently to protests, Godwin recalls, 'I feel the profound guilt of those who can escape. I am soaring away from my fragile, breathless father with his tentative hold on life. I'm soaring away from my mother, who still lies in her hospital bed surrounded by wounded protesters.'[117] The image of his frail parents stresses their innocence in the face of government violence. Godwin expands from this familial abandonment to enumerate all the people he leaves behind to suffer under the dictatorship while he drinks champagne on the flight. Although he mentions black African demonstrators who have been wounded, they are not referred to by name as are 'John Worsley-Worswick, […] Caro, […] Roy Bennett',[118] but constitute instead, as Harris says in another context, 'a nameless mass, in need of white protection'.[119] By putting familiar faces on some victims and not others, Godwin makes them

[115] Rothberg in Moses and Rothberg, 'A Dialogue on the Ethics and Politics of Transcultural Memory', 32, italics in original.
[116] Harris, 'Facing/Defacing Robert Mugabe', 115–16, quoting Judith Butler, *Precarious Life* (London: Verso, 2004), xiv-xv. Consider also Terri Tomsky's argument on 'trauma's marketability' which suggests that some suffering gains greater awareness than other. Tomsky, 'From Sarajevo to 9/11', 49.
[117] Godwin, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 229.
[118] Ibid., 229–30.
[119] Harris, 'Facing/Defacing Robert Mugabe', 114.

grievable and assists the commemoration of a select part of the population. While he may conceive of this as rectifying a racist government's insistence on seeing whites as villains, his intervention is not balanced out by a strong focus elsewhere in popular and media culture on the much more numerous black victims of Mugabe's strong-arm tactics. Instead, he adds to a commemorative chorus in the West which focuses on the 'genocide of whites' and uses it to retell the colonial past in a nostalgic light.[120] Godwin encourages a reading of white Zimbabwean experience as genocide as he repeatedly compares it to that of persecuted Jews during the Holocaust.[121] According to Rothberg's scheme this can be read as a plead for solidarity which draws on the reader's empathy for victims of the Holocaust, while the event itself is 'unmoor[ed] […] from its historical specificity' and used 'as an abstract code for Evil'.[122]

In *When a Crocodile*, it is not only Godwin's own family but the generic 'white family' which is relied on for witness accounts as he interviews victims of the land reforms. In his vicarious suffering through other people's families, Godwin emphasises their 'family-ness': the evicted farmers all have little children and aging mothers and the homes they have been trying to build are being torn apart by Mugabe. He describes father-less toddlers, children hiding under their beds while their father is being hacked to death and teddy bears at funerals.[123] This expands his personal family story to be one among many representing the same fate of 'the white family in Africa', consistently under threat and consistently battling valiantly, with local people on their side, against the evil violence of a small elite and their thugs. Indeed, his parents' fight for a 'way of life' may be a fight for the very way in which one can be a white family in Africa. The same goes for several of the families he visits, such as the Selbys where he laments the 'derelict' condition of home, swimming pool and tennis court. Here, too, there is an unspoken assumption that because these are families under threat, we cannot begin to point out their historical role in a racially unequal society nor in the

[120] Ibid., 105.
[121] Godwin, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 121, 176, 230.
[122] Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, 229.
[123] Godwin, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 63–64, 69, 87–88.

continued inequalities of wealth. Godwin does not acknowledge that when he says that the Selbys' farm had a bakery which served 15,000 locals, this does not only, as he seems to imply, suggest the importance of that farm to feeding the local community, but also demonstrates the concentration and accumulation of capital in few hands and the persistence of colonial-era inequalities.[124] Instead, he describes the defiance of the farmer's elderly mother who is trying to salvage 'the rosebushes given to her by her mother-in-law as an anniversary gift' with the help of 'Panga, the family cook' only to be stopped by one of the squatting thugs.[125] The frailty of the white farmer's mother, the innocence and symbolism of the flowers she is trying to rescue and her alliance with a local servant combine to put the family beyond reproach for their complicity in a massively unequal society.

In these stories of family losses, the white family becomes victim of a pain which is so great that it becomes unethical to cast them as anything but victims. What Gilroy describes as 'contest[ing] and then seiz[ing] the position of the victim'[126] is carried out at a very personal level. As Rothberg would put it, this competes with other memories of violence to make the memory of the dead family member sacred, demanding the reader's empathy rather than interrogation. The tragic memories are complemented with stories of desecrated graves which serve to emphasise the perceived descent from a civilised to a more primitive, backward state.

In a study of British efforts to conserve European cemeteries in India, Elizabeth Buettner argues that such cemeteries 'act as barometer' for how the colonial era is reassessed.[127] The British amateur conservation efforts are, she suggests, 'but one facet of a wider agenda to place colonizers' lives and works in a positive light for postcolonial audiences deemed prone to critiquing what the Raj and Britons involved in it represented.'[128] The desecration of private sites of memory, including family graves, childhood homes, schools and holiday destinations, looms large in Fuller and Godwin's

[124] Ibid., 178.
[125] Ibid., 179.
[126] Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*, 105.
[127] Buettner, 'Cemeteries, Public Memory and Raj Nostalgia', 7.
[128] Ibid., 16.

memoirs, and provides another vehicle for the merging of tragedy and nostalgia.

Buettner suggests that some of the potency of the cemetery lies in linking the Raj to personal sacrifice: 'Tombstones and graveyards provide ample means to rehabilitate tarnished images of the British and, through recounting the "high price of service in the East," allow persons who might be depicted as colonial oppressors to be recast as victims.'[129] As with the stories discussed above in which the settler family takes on the role of the victim, the ethical contract surrounding the grave as a sacred site allows for a depoliticisation of memory which is in itself highly political in its implications. Once again, the unquestionable tragedy of dying children is particularly effective: 'Children's graves – belonging to the most "innocent" members of colonial society – are commonly singled out as among the most "poignant" and tragic examples of the "cost of empire."'[130] In Fuller and Godwin's memoirs, the desecrated graves of their siblings are used as occasions for debate about mutual respect, questioning the ability of different people (read: races) to live together in harmony. After describing the death of Adrian, her older brother whom she never got to know, Fuller describes his grave where the bronze name marker had been stolen:

> 'You can't blame desperate people for that,' Dad says.
>
> Mum looks up and her eyes are bright. 'Yes, you can,' she says. She is adamant. 'Yes, you must.'
>
> And it seems to me that both my parents are correct. Whether out of desperation, ignorance or hostility, humans have an unerring capacity to ignore one another's sacred traditions and to defile one another's hallowed grounds: the Palawa Aborigines lost on Waternish, […] the Boers dying in British concentration camps, thousands of Kikuyu perishing during the Mau Mau, the Rucks family hacked to death in Kenya's White Highlands, Adrian's grave desecrated.[131]

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[129] Ibid., 19.
[130] Ibid., 18.
[131] Fuller, *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness*, 144.

This final list of human suffering could be interpreted using Moses and Rothberg's notion of the 'flattening out' of historical difference through the 'relativization' of memories.[132] Here, Fuller seems to suggest that the stealing of the bronze marker on her brother's grave by desperately poor people can be equated to the British concentration camps for Kikuyus and Boers and the genocide of Aboriginal peoples. While her intention seems to be one of inviting mutual solidarity and understanding, the result may come across as deeply offensive in its relativisation of suffering. Through her parents' dialogue, Fuller acknowledges both her understanding of the economic desperation, voiced by her father, and, through her mother, the insistence that this pain is too personal to be interpreted in economic terms.

In Godwin's second memoir, a visit to his sister's grave is disturbing, almost traumatic to him. He cannot find the grave because the plaques have been stolen, but a cemetery worker helps him find it:

> I move the flowers away from my face and, losing their sweet masking scent, am assailed by the overpowering smell of human shit. I see now that there is a fresh mound of wet turds right in front of me, right in front of Jain. In the time we have been down at the office, someone has crapped here. I kneel down to prop my mother's unwieldy flower bunch against Jain's blank headstone. But when I stand back up, the flowers slowly topple over. I dive to save them, but I am too late, and they fall across the stinking mound. I pick them up to see there is a wide streak of mustard shit all across the white arum lilies. Symbols of purity, my mother had called them.
>
> 'Fuck this!' I shout, and I hurl the flowers away, up in a wide parabola. It lands near two women who are bent over, hoeing their cemetery corn, their babies strapped on their backs. They stop their hoeing, look up for a moment, and murmur to each other, and one

[132] Moses and Rothberg, 'A Dialogue on the Ethics and Politics of Transcultural Memory', 30, 32.

> laughs. And then they go back to their digging. I wonder which one of them crapped there.[133]

While understandably very disturbing, his anger at the women's laughter at his misery prevents any retrospective reflection of the economic hardship that must press these women into using a cemetery as their lavatory and for cultivation. Suddenly, all of 'Africa' seems to be desecrating his most sacred memories and his exasperated 'Fuck this!' becomes a comment on Zimbabwe as a whole. The stories of the desecration of Fuller and Godwin's siblings' graves can be read as displacing some of the guilt for their deaths onto 'Africa'.

In her description of European cemeteries in India, Buettner also cites worries that memorials have been vandalised, gravestones 're-used in new constructions' and cemeteries occupied by 'vagrants'.[134] However, as she observes, this has rarely been because of 'hostility' to the purpose of 'commemorat[ing] European colonizers who died in the subcontinent' but rather the result of forgetting – European memorials are neglected because they have lost their meaning to Indians who have more pressing conflicts to worry about.[135] The women described by Godwin do not leave their excrements on his sister's grave in an act of wilful hostility but out of indifference to her memory. But as we will see, the threat of being forgotten seems almost worse to Godwin than being resented. This may explain his need to place himself at the centre of historical events and to continue to write himself into the Zimbabwean past and present.

The desecrated memorials relate to a broader theme of disrepair of formerly prosperous areas which goes through all four books and which can be seen as an important part of the nostalgic mode in its creation of a contrast against which the past becomes more idyllic. Both authors describe returning to places associated with fond childhood memories, places that had once been wealthy and well-kept, to find them abandoned and uncared

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[133] Godwin, *When a Crocodile Eats the Sun*, 188.
[134] Buettner, 'Cemeteries, Public Memory and Raj Nostalgia', 21–23.
[135] Ibid., 23–24.

for. When referring to these as 'memory sites', I intend more physically delimited spaces than the wide array of 'sites' encompassed by Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire*. But like Nora's memory sites, the places in Fuller and Godwin's memoirs are commemorated in a way which suggests their fear 'that without commemorative vigilance, history would soon sweep them away.'[136] Though they are not national symbols like Nora's, Fuller and Godwin seem to read the disrepair of their private sites as emblematic of a disintegrating social order.

In 2002, Fuller went back to her childhood farm 'to see what traces of my family remained there.'[137] Her account creates a stark contrast between her own family's hard work to keep the farm productive and the disrepair into which it had fallen: 'I found the essential shape of our old farm unchanged, although it was no longer recognizable as the struggling commercial enterprise my parents ran during the war.' She sets up the contrast between the efforts to keep nature in order and productive and the surrender to nature of the present owners: 'The fences had collapsed and instead of crops or cattle, scrubby bush had begun to encroach. Where Mum had kept a neat, thatched dairy, there was only a tangle of lantana thicket.'[138] Her parents, who have otherwise been characterised by their drunken and chaotic lifestyle and by their struggles rather than successes in farming, suddenly become exemplars of order and productivity – a nostalgic rewriting of her childhood which is only meaningful in contrast to the disorder she laments in the present.

When she visits her parents' new farm in Zambia, she observes how '[m]y parents' farm is a miracle of productivity, order and routine – measuring, feeding, pruning, weeding, weighing, packing', and notes how they start working well before she awakes.[139] In contrast, the new inhabitant of their old farm

[136] Nora, 'Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*', 12. See also chapter two.
[137] Fuller, *Cocktail Hour Under the Tree of Forgetfulness*, 194.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Ibid., 219–20.

> looked as if he had just woken up. I apologized for the intrusion, introduced myself and asked him if I might sit on the veranda for a moment to look at the view.
>
> The young man considered my request for a while, then he shrugged and said the view did not belong to him. 'Look at it if you want,' he said. But before I could thank him, he shut the door and I was left alone.[140]

The young man is represented as unfriendly, inhospitable as well as lazy, appearing to have just awoken and having let the family's hard work go to waste. He does not recognise the splendour of the view nor the emotional import the farm has to Fuller as her childhood home. She seems unsettled by his unwillingness to reminisce with her which, like the disrepair of the farm, constitutes an act of disrespect for her memories.

This image of returning to a home which has grown unfamiliar because of its derelict condition also appears in Godwin's first memoir. Here, he went back to his childhood village which 'seemed to represent my whole childhood.'[141] Rather than revisiting his old house, he returned to the clinic where his mother had worked hard to help sick locals: 'The clinic looked abandoned. […] Creepers and weeds had started to grow from them. The sheet-iron roof was working loose; it flapped and banged as the breeze tugged at it.'[142] Again, it is the overtaking of nature that is used to signify the disappearance of the ordering hand of white people, associated with the civilising properties of medicine and agriculture. If read symbolically, we can see these returns as mourning the irretrievability of a lost childhood. But read politically, they also seem to justify the rule that went before or at least the presence of white settlers as benevolent and productive, making the soil fertile and abundant and knowing how to care for their homes – and by extension, making Africa their homes and cementing their belonging.

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[140] Ibid., 195–96.
[141] Godwin, *Mukiwa*, 404.
[142] Ibid., 405.

As we saw in chapter three, the schoolroom is a site for the conflation of private and public identity work and is retrospectively important for that reason. Godwin describes going back to his old school and points to its deterioration, symbolised by the new headmaster's embarrassment at being unable to afford to keep the pool free of algae, the disappearance of whites once again followed by the creeping takeover of nature. The headmaster showed Godwin that he was still in the school register, '"You see," he said proudly, "we still try to keep up the old standards."'[143] The suggestion seems to be that 'ordinary Africans' regret the current state of affairs and dream themselves back to the 'old standards', clearly identified with white rule.

Retracing the steps of his childhood, Godwin depicts postcolonial Africa as reverting to a backward state. Holiday memories – an important point of reference in family lore – offer a him a chance to contrast Beira in independent Mozambique with the Portuguese-ruled seaside town he had visited with his family as a child:

> I was staggered by the change. Beria itself was a town under siege, difficult to recognize as the town we had holidayed in all those years ago. Most of the graceful avenues of flamboyant trees had been hacked down for firewood. The luxury seaside villas were ruined, cannibalized for building materials.[144]

Though he uses the language of cannibalism to describe buildings rather than people, its connotations are significant in a passage which portrays Africa as reverted to a less civilised stage. Interestingly, while the depiction of Beira earlier in the memoir stressed its relative poverty, when compared to its post-colonial iteration, the holiday memories of uncleanliness and inefficiency are superseded by a retrospective projection of flamboyancy and riches: 'The municipal market, a bustling fruit and vegetable emporium as I remembered it, seemed to have nothing for sale. Nothing at all.'[145]

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[143] Ibid., 406.
[144] Ibid., 390.
[145] Ibid., 391. Compare the initial holiday memories, pp. 152-161.

He had a hard time finding a hotel, because they were filled up with refugees, and far from meeting the hospitality of his childhood memories, he was told to '"Fuck off home, white man."'[146] The hotel he managed to find, 'The Grand Hotel, designed to be the plushest hotel in the country, was similarly ravaged and long since closed to paying guests.' Once again, nature had taken over, as 'several substantial fig trees had taken root in its balconies.' The place which used to be a place of luxurious consumption had been relegated to manual labour: 'In the marbled entrance hall, women were pounding *manioc* with mortar and pestle.'[147]

Repeating the colonial idea of the difference between Europe and Africa as a temporal one,[148] Godwin portrays the hotel as belonging to a different age:

> The lift shafts were clogged with rubbish so we took the solid teak stairway that swept up in an elegant curve from the reception. As we made our way up, buckets of slop were emptied out of windows above into the street outside. I felt as though we were in some medieval street scene. I followed the *chefe da guarda* down the long unlit corridor, walking gingerly to avoid the malodorous coiled turds that waited there in the darkness to be squelched upon, and gaggling on the stench. He was reminiscing all the way.[149]

The chefe da guarda told him about serving the president of Portugal at the hotel, again stressing the stark contrast between past and present. As at his sister's grave, human faeces figure as the ultimate sign of disorder. The regression from a civilised to less civilised or even animal state implied in this scene is elaborated in the next where Godwin revisits a zoo fondly remembered from his childhood. Here, all the animals had starved to death,

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[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid., italics in original.
[148] McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 40–41. On the idea of 'history [...] running in reverse', see Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity*, 13.
[149] Godwin, *Mukiwa*, 392, italics in original.

'its fenced enclosures collapsed and overgrown', and a family lived behind the iron bars of what used to be the lions' cage.[150]

The recurring image in these return visits of Fuller and Godwin is of disorder: nature has taken over houses and humans dwell in the empty cages of the zoo. On the one hand, the suggestion is that they were going back in time, as the hotel looked like 'some medieval street scene'. But at the same time, these scenes depend on a chronological forward movement so that the houses and zoo cages of a more prosperous and orderly age can act as the backdrop for the takeover of nature which seems wilder in its power to conquer 'civilised' space. With the black takeover of power in national politics and the encroachment of nature on memory sites unfolding in parallel, black people almost seem to *become* nature in the memoirs.

Like the reminiscing chefe da guarda and the school principal, the owner of the zoo took Godwin on 'a strange retrospective tour', proudly referring to its erstwhile glories.[151] Looking at the empty crocodile cage where she explained they had had to feed the starving animals with cats and dogs, '[w]e stood together staring at the memory of it.'[152] Godwin suggests, then, that it is not just he who was on a trip down memory lane, but that he was accompanied by a number of people who clung to the memory of the past and despaired as it slipped away from them. This seems to justify nostalgia as shared by 'ordinary people', and implies that it has its own self-evident presence that he merely describes rather than conjures. Fuller, by contrast, was denied such a moment of shared reminiscing by the new occupant of her childhood home, who did not stay to take in the view with her – indeed, he seemed not to care for the natural scene which was so important for her family's love of the place. The overtaking of nature and the reversal to a primitive state signals the disappearance of the ordering white hand. Rid of their families, these sites can no longer be recognised as home but only used to reflect nostalgically upon the disappearance of what used to be.

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[150] Ibid., 392–95.
[151] Ibid., 392–93.
[152] Ibid., 393.

Conclusion

When Fuller and Godwin wrote their memoirs, they did not belong to the group holding political power in Zimbabwe. But they did belong to a privileged elite with the means, education and colour to gain acceptance in the West. This enabled them to leave the deteriorating conditions of the countries where they grew up, and it gave them access to an audience. Yet it was their African past, not their Western present, which interested this audience. In their memoirs, Fuller and Godwin comply with this desire for African narratives in the context of the discursive shifts that followed in the wake of land reforms. While their own expatriate position, postcolonial disenchantment with white rule and the increasing government hostility towards whites in Zimbabwe serve as triple challenges to their claim to belonging, the authors maintain that claim through reference to their family connection. They also use this connection to place themselves in the political landscape by emphasising their own liberal politics and affiliating or disaffiliating themselves from their parents' tolerant or racist attitudes. And finally, they use stories of family tragedy to position themselves and whites more broadly as victims rather than perpetrators in Africa. The sanctity of the family is used to disallow criticism and to stress the wrongdoing implied in desecrating family memorials. This serves to compete with black Africans for claims to victimhood and to relativise suffering by pointing to painful personal memories. The derelict condition of personal sites of memory convey the authors' unease with the new order which is characterised by a distinct lack of order, by the takeover of nature and reversal to a more primitive state of living. Through these overgrown familial sites, the authors relate to the national present and reveal their nostalgia for a more ordered past.

Discussing the memories of post-imperial nations, Dietmar Rothermund has proposed that it is useful to distinguish between 'amnesia' and 'a conspiracy of silence'. The latter

> may be due to a feeling of shame or discomfort, and unwillingness to articulate repentance for deeds which one may not have done but which one had tolerated. This kind of silence is the very opposite of amnesia. Whereas those who suffer from a loss of memory usually try to recover it, the participants in a conspiracy of silence do not want the silence to be broken.[153]

While Rothermund's distinction is developed for the level of the collective, it can usefully be applied to individuals as well. When they focus on white victims, Fuller and Godwin have not been struck by amnesia, and they occasionally acknowledge black victims of racism in the past and of violence in the present. Yet through their focus on the frail white family, they participate in a 'conspiracy of silence' which elevates one kind of suffering above others.[154] This may be ascribed to 'shame or discomfort, and unwillingness to articulate repentance'. As liberals who believe in the multi-racial society promised by decolonisation, Fuller and Godwin have difficulties coming to terms with their own fond memories of a past in which they can be identified with white minority rule. Yet in a present in which anti-colonial rhetoric is used by a totalitarian ruler to cast them as outsiders, they have found an outlet for these torn memories. Their family links make both their nostalgia and their claims to victimhood appear more intimate and less political in nature and allow them to speak with legitimacy about a place they have long since left behind.

[153] Rothermund, 'Memories of Post-Imperial Nations', 5.
[154] Or, as Schwarz says of the violence against Aboriginal Australians: 'It is not that nobody knew what had happened; it is that, in an act of disavowal, nobody cared to remember.' Schwarz, *The White Man's World*, 201.

7
Conclusion

After the celebration of his school principal which opened this thesis, C. L. R. James notes that he did eventually come to take a more critical stance on his education:

> It was only long years after that I understood the limitation on spirit, vision and self-respect which was imposed on us by the fact that our masters, our curriculum, our code of morals, *everything* began from the basis that Britain was the source of all light and leading, and our business was to admire, wonder, imitate, learn; our criterion of success was to have succeeded in approaching that distant ideal – to attain it was, of course, impossible. Both masters and boys accepted it as in the very nature of things. The masters could not be offensive about it because they thought it was their function to do this, if they thought about it at all; and, as for me, it was the beacon that beckoned me.[1]

While much more subtle in his exploration of the attraction that British culture exerted on him than most of the writers in this study, James is here setting in place a template for the recollection of colonial education which would become influential in the years to come. Not only his fellow-Caribbean writers, but also authors from other parts of the empire would come to inscribe their personal memories of schooling according to a script of cultural imposition and imitation. Like these other writers, James signals that a change has come about in his attitude to empire which causes him to understand his childhood years anew. This change can be called decolonisation. Not understood as fleeting moment of changing flags but as an extended period of time during which ideas about the legitimacy of

[1] James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 29–30, italics in original.

empire came under pressure while communities around the world reformulated narratives about themselves and their past. As James demonstrates, these changes impacted on individual narratives as well. Writing at the height of decolonisation, James' memories are necessarily influenced by his own and others' anti-colonialism. But he also uses his own memories to illustrate the workings of empire and to influence how the imperial past is to be narrated in a future Caribbean society. In this dialogical process between individual and collective memories, James represents an important aspect of the end of empire autobiography.

To understand that dialogue, we need to situate the literary genre within its historical context and ask about the role of memory in both. In the introduction, I discussed debates over how decolonisation should be narrated. Stephen Howe identifies a paradoxical neglect of decolonisation in postcolonial studies and an obsession with it in imperial history.[2] In drawing together these two fields, Howe is already making an important step towards the resolution of the conundrum that preoccupies him. If we want to understand the shifts and continuities that accompanied decolonisation as a cultural and historical phenomenon, we cannot afford to be restricted by disciplinary boundaries.

This study has sought to cut across such boundaries by using a source which is in itself placed between literature and history, the autobiographical narrative, to examine the artistic expression of a historical phenomenon: namely the dialogue between individual and collective memory at the end of empire. To have left out either the historical context or the literary articulations would have rendered the study impossible. This may seem self-evident, but it demonstrates how inextricable these elements are. By turning our attention towards how the era surrounding decolonisation has been narrated by individuals and societies, perhaps we may come up with new ways to narrate it ourselves. In proposing a new way to narrate decolonisation, I want to emphasise the dialogue between individual and collective memories. This will bring out the interdependency of these levels

[2] Howe, 'Crosswinds and Countercurrents', 255–56.

of recollection and will help to illustrate what characterises memory after empire.

Individual and Collective Memory

Are our recollections our own or are they merely products of external influences? Such questions have preoccupied scholars of memory for at least a century.[3] This study has demonstrated the strength of the collective in affecting what is remembered and how it is articulated. As individuals look back upon their own lives, they do so surrounded by people and narratives that cause them to emphasise certain experiences and inflect the meaning of those experiences in particular ways. Yet authors of autobiographies are not empty vessels for the distilling of collective memory. It is precisely their self-perception as unique individuals with an important personal story to tell that makes these writers autobiographers. If there are collective templates for how to tell one's story, these have to be filled with experiences provided and made sense of by individuals. Ultimately, it is impossible to extract the individual and the social from one another when studying memory. We cannot study the one without looking at the effects of the other.

In the four preceding chapters, I have examined different aspects of this dialogue between individual and collective memory after empire. In chapters three and four, we saw how writing after decolonisation imbues colonial education and journeys to the imperial metropole with symbolic import and makes such memories loci for reflection about the imperial world-order of a by-gone age and one's past stance on empire. And in chapters five and six, we saw how people turn to the past to justify their right to speak as national subjects when dreams of independence have been crushed by a totalitarian government casting them as outsiders. In all of this, the authors respond to narratives about the past and the present that are in circulation at the time of writing in ways which shape their own stories and may in turn feed back into those shared narratives.

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[3] Bartlett, *Remembering*; Cubitt, *History and Memory*, 72–75; Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*; Olick and Robbins, 'Social Memory Studies', 109; Brockmeier, *Beyond the Archive*.

The memories of colonial education in chapter three are acts of positioning in which the authors draw on an increasingly widespread narrative of colonial education as imperial propaganda to make sense of their own experience and to signal their current attitudes to empire to a post-colonial audience. They do so by stressing the alienating effects of rehearsing a foreign history and literary tradition which kept their native culture from them and robbed them of the tools to understand their own experience. Through reference to their snobbish imitation of English speech, they point to the division the imperial connection created within colonial society between an imperial-minded elite and a more authentically local working class. For all their scrutiny of the discourses that informed their colonial education, the authors offer no interrogation into the narrative framework that might today shape how they recall their schooling. Ward and Ker Conway present their questioning of the curriculum as emerging from within a core self, uncorrupted by imperial brainwashing, while Clarke implicitly places his critical awareness after the narrated time without addressing how it came about. Despite differences in their historical circumstances, the authors employ the same postcolonial tropes to position themselves retrospectively in opposition to empire.

In chapter four, we also saw individual experience used to signal disaffection with empire, in this case through the turning points experienced in the imperial metropole. The narratives of disappointed expectations and newfound belongings demonstrate both shared patterns and individual or local specificities to remembrance. Thus, Fitzpatrick and Lamming use their own stories as emblematic of larger, nationalist narratives, while Gladwell and White focus on their personal attachments to God or a partner. Although all four authors employ a racialised language to explain their feelings of the gaze of the other casting them as outsiders, only Gladwell and Lamming use their own experience to reflect upon racial discrimination and its connection to empire. For all four authors, however, a shared pattern emerges because the imperial metropole carries a different symbolic import at the time of writing than it did when they set out on their journeys.

Reflecting that change in the collective narrative context, the sojourn becomes, in each text, a vehicle for reflections about home and belonging.

Smith and Nkomo's political memoirs also reflect their narrative context as they write in conscious resistance to a master narrative condemning their political leadership and insist upon a different interpretation of the past. However, even such counter-narratives are patterned. They use many of the same tropes and structuring devices to narrate their accounts despite stark differences in their political observations as well as their actual experiences. They both participate in smaller narrative communities which emphasise precisely their status as keepers of the true story about the past within which their stories are not counter- but master narratives. But as self-perceived carriers of a counter-memory, they share the need to assert their right to speak, and as defeated leaders accused of treason they both seek to affirm their legitimacy by invoking their popular endorsement and their status as betrayed rather than traitors. While they would probably protest against the comparison, and while we should remember that they do represent widely different historical experiences, their memoirs demonstrate the power of narrative templates in shaping individual expressions.

While Smith and Nkomo tell their story through their relationship with 'the people', Fuller and Godwin focus on the much more intimate community of the family. But their stories are still caught up with the larger narrative context – both in Zimbabwe, as they are writing against Mugabe's vilification of whites as outsiders, and in the West, as they contribute to a story of whites in Africa as victims. They use their family connection to claim Africa as their home and to tell nostalgic and tragic stories which commemorate whites as decent people and an ordering force, positioning them as frail victims rather than oppressors. In these narratives, we can observe the impact of the time of writing by studying the difference between Godwin's two memoirs written before and after the land reforms. It is borne out by the fact that his second memoir is much more assertive in his claims to belonging and has shifted its main enemy from Smith to Mugabe and its

victims from those massacred in Matabeleland to white families. The collective narrative context is thus powerful in shaping both the content and style of autobiographical writing.

Here, an interesting observation about the autobiography as memory text arises. As discussed in chapter six, Fuller and Godwin seem to position themselves as liberals and one would thus not expect them to downplay the value of African lives and emphasise white victimhood. Yet that is exactly what comes across in the structuring of their narratives. Whether this is intentional or not, we cannot say, as we do not have access to their spontaneous memories but only to their articulations. Thus, we cannot get at the element of artifice that has gone into rearranging what the authors remember to achieve the reader's empathy with whites as victims. But we can observe, quite vividly, that Fuller and Godwin achieve this effect and by so doing corroborate a narrative of victimhood in the West. Whether they overwhelmingly remember white victims or have chosen to represent their recollections as such, they demonstrate a repressive mechanism which I would argue reflects not only personal but collective memory culture.

Since memory, in the forms that we have access to studying, is always mediated and articulated, what we find in the autobiography is only an extreme version of that phenomenon.[4] Here, the rememberer can use all means available, including deliberate lies and manipulation, to communicate his/her past; and not only may it be difficult to find out whether the account corresponds to the historical reality, we have no way of ascertaining whether this is actually how the past is remembered. It is thus only natural that the historian would be sceptical of the autobiography as a source for truth about the past. But as a source for how people seek to represent the past in the present, the autobiography is powerful and reflects the constant dialogue with collective memories.

While the authors may be unconscious about the extent to which their memories and narrative choices are affected by their context, their texts are also the result of hours of editing and concerted efforts to tell the past in a

[4] Saunders, 'Life-Writing, Cultural Memory, and Literary Studies', 323.

particular way. Besides literary demands for plot structure and an entertaining narrative, the shape of an autobiography is the result of conscious choices about how one wants to represent oneself to an audience. In other words, what we have before us is a specific window onto the relationship between individual and collective memory. Through this window, we see memories that insist on their individuality but which are written in response to collectively circulated narratives about the past.

As with other responses, these autobiographical texts are written with an expectation that they will be heard and that what they express may have an impact on the perceptions of others. The authors in this study have had the resources to write and publish their autobiographical writings and many of them were already established public figures by the time they did so. This is part of what makes the memories more than merely products of external influences and yet intensely shaped by the collective. Participating in a societal dialogue, the authors not only reflect but seek to affect shared narratives about the colonial and decolonising past. More or less consciously, they engage in a negotiation about how the past is told which has consequences for the present and the future. On the personal level, how they recount the past and their attitudes to empire bears upon how they can position themselves within a post-empire society. On the level of the collective, adding their personal accounts may alter the way groups remember the past and to what political purposes it can be put in the present.

How their stories have been received in the public sphere is a different question which opens up fascinating venues for exploration. Because of my focus on how the authors position themselves in relation to an imagined audience, I have refrained from examining also their actual audiences and the publication histories of the texts.[5] However, it is possible to offer some preliminary observations about a pattern in the publication of these after empire autobiographies. Apart from a few outliers, most of the Caribbean autobiographies in this study cluster around the 1960s, most of the

[5] For a discussion of the negotiations between 'memory makers' and 'memory consumers', see Kansteiner, 'Finding Meaning in Memory'.

Australian around the 1980s and most of the Zimbabwean around the new millennium. This suggests an increased interest at those moments in personal narratives that might make sense of a collectively and individually felt experience. Whether the authors have been approached by publishers or whether they have written of their own volition, they have felt it relevant to write and their publishers have considered it worthwhile to print their stories, presumably expecting that they would find a receptive audience. There may be something, then, that makes these texts particularly prone to strike a chord at particular moments.

The Specificity of After Empire Memories

This leads us to ponder: What is the specificity of the end of empire moment? Arguably, other moments of dramatic historical change would provide similar occasions for a study of how individuals respond to historical change, say, the Second World War or the collapse of the Soviet Union.[6] What is it that characterises the recollections in this thesis which we would not find in any other memory context? Two related observations emerge: one is the concern with the relationship between the local and the global, the other is the postcolonial slant of many of the memories.

Like the empire that came before it, decolonisation was a global phenomenon. What we have seen in the autobiographical narratives from three different contexts are manifestations of a memory culture that is also transnational. I argued in the introduction that although the three contexts under scrutiny in this thesis have taken widely different pathways out of empire, it nonetheless makes sense to study them together since those roads have been lined, in each case, with discussions about the legitimacy of empire and with new representations of collective national identities. These have had an impact on how the national and imperial pasts are narrated. This becomes apparent in end of empire autobiographies through authorial preoccupation with the relationship between the local and the global, the

[6] Greenblatt, Rév, and Starn, 'Identifying Histories'; Michielsens, 'Memory Frames: The Role of Concepts and Cognition in Telling Life-Stories'; Mitscherlich and Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn*.

national and the imperial, the native and the foreign, as the individual's place within those larger communities is negotiated.

In a time of changing borders and of border-crossing movements, it is natural that notions of home and belonging should keep reappearing (as we saw in particular in chapters four and six), with their ability to connect the intimate, the social and the national. The autobiography becomes, in these instances, a means through which to voice crises of belonging and to affirm one's emotional attachment to a place and a community. These 'homes', whether they be Australia, the West Indies or (white) Zimbabwe, are all interpreted through a post-imperial lens. They attain their symbolic meaning for the individual through an encounter with shared narratives in which Britain has been rejected as 'Home' and in which colonial settlers have become suspect. Whereas the Caribbean and Australian writers respond by themselves rejecting attachments to Britain, the white Zimbabweans do not accept the narrative which would cast them as illegitimate in Africa but instead insist upon their right to calling it 'home'. In each case, the changes wrought by decolonisation cause reflections about belonging that link the individual to a national and international context.

Thus, the memories we find in these texts are not restricted to their national contexts. Many of the authors write from a different country than the one they were brought up in or to a globally dispersed audience. But even those who have stayed put use the global scene to reflect upon their attachment to the local. Despite or even because of the fact that many of the autobiographers are nationalists, their attacks on colonial education or the gaze of the metropolitan other are directed outside the national borders, at institutions, people and discourses that are criticised by virtue of being perceived as *foreign* and *alienating*.

The postcolonial or anti-imperial discourses that many of the writers adopt are themselves global phenomena. From abolitionism over pan-Africanism to Black Lives Matter, movements for social change have used the same print culture that Benedict Anderson shows is so important for

forging communities to create a transnational space for protest.[7] This border-crossing inspiration gathered pace with globalisation. After the Second World War, anti-colonial rhetoric grew in tandem with other movements propelled by a human rights discourse like the civil rights, students, women and gay rights movements, all of them calling for representation and equal rights.[8] As evidenced in the successes of Enoch Powell and UKIP, in the fierceness of the Australian History Wars or the persistence of the ex-Rhodesian community, these shifts have not been absolute but have been accompanied by pushbacks against what Smith would call the destruction of Western Christian civilisation. However, these reactions are themselves global, even if articulated in nativist language – language which perversely inverts anti-colonial rhetoric by borrowing from ideas about national sovereignty and situating Europeans as victims rather than perpetrators of colonial violence.[9]

The transnational character of postcolonial and post-imperial discourses becomes apparent in the autobiographies through the travelling of tropes, or as Astrid Erll puts it, 'travelling memory', as patterns of recollection move across the globe.[10] We see it in the clustering of reflections about empire around memories of education and metropolitan sojourns, and we find it in the nostalgia for a colonial childhood couched in 'Paradise Lost' metaphors. The language of colonial oppression and alienation which reappears in Ward, Fitzpatrick and Ker Conway's autobiographies jars with our knowledge about the historical reality of settler colonialism in Australia. And yet, these authors have clearly found such language useful to make sense of their experience – partly to signal their rejection of empire, partly because of its proven usefulness to convey colonial experience. Similarly, the language of victimhood so readily adopted by Fuller and Godwin has been

[7] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 9–36.
[8] Burke, *Decolonization and the Evolution of International Human Rights*; Stammers, *Human Rights and Social Movements*, 131–59; Schwarz, 'Crossing the Seas', 13–14; Von Eschen, *Race Against Empire*.
[9] Attwood, *Telling the Truth about Aboriginal History*, 62–63; Buettner, *Europe after Empire*, 77, 461–62, 497; Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia*, 95, 105; Karner, 'Questioning Memory Nationalism'; O'Toole, 'Brexit Is Being Driven by English Nationalism. And It Will End in Self-Rule'; Uusihakala, 'Memory Meanders', 155–56.
[10] Erll, 'Travelling Memory'.

developed for other contexts but is appropriated with new agendas. Even Smith, one of the most reviled figures for postcolonialists, articulates his resistance to Britain's pressure for majority rule in terms borrowed from anti-colonial discourse about the right to self-determination.

In spite of the differences in how decolonisation was played out in various parts of the empire, it was accompanied everywhere by narrative reworkings of collective identities which included revision of the national past. These were adapted to local circumstances yet inspired by global exchanges. They impacted on the institutional levels of society but also on its individuals. By studying an individualist genre with a focus on how it speaks to a shared circumstance, we can keep the individual and the collective within the same analytical frame to better understand their dialogue. What emerges are strikingly similar expressions of memory despite differences in experience, country, politics, race and gender. Recalling their lives after empire, these autobiographers participate in a national and global dialogue about the imperial past in which they tend to cast themselves in a positive light by stressing their past and present critical stance on empire. The authors thus position themselves not only in the past but with an eye to the present.

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